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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, today, open the minds of our lawmakers, that they may welcome new insights and knowledge You wish to give them. Remind them of Your admonition that they should love You with all their minds.

Lord, give them the wisdom to refuse to cling so tightly to the past that they limit what You can do for them in the future. Give them the courage to change their minds when that is needed.

Lord, may they be tolerant to the thoughts of others and open to the truth wherever they may find it.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2118

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2118) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for increased investment in clean energy, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under rule XIV, I object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection has been heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on today's, tomorrow's, and this week's business, the Senate will soon vote on two more nominees to join President Biden's administration: Christopher Fonzone to serve as general counsel for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and Kiran Ahuja to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management. Those votes will happen tonight and tomorrow.

The discussions on the bipartisan infrastructure bill and a budget reconciliation bill are both moving forward and will continue throughout the week.

But tomorrow—tomorrow—the Senate will also take a crucial vote on whether to start debate on major voting rights legislation.

I want to say that again. Tomorrow, the Senate will take a vote on whether to start debate on legislation to protect Americans' voting rights. It is not a vote on any particular policy. It is not a vote on this bill or that bill. It is a vote on whether the Senate should simply debate the issue about voting rights—the crucial issue of voting rights in this country.

Now, by all rights, we shouldn't have to debate voting rights on the floor of the U.S. Senate. These rights should be sacrosanct, but the events of the last few months compel us to have this debate now.

Why is there such urgency? Because of what has been happening in Republican legislature after legislature in the last several months. Voting rights—the most fundamental right of a democracy, the right that men and women have died for in wartime and in peacetime, the right by which all other rights are secured—are under assault—under assault from one end of the country to the other.

In the wake of the 2020 election, Donald Trump told a lie—a Big Lie—that the election was stolen from him by voter fraud. There was no evidence for this. His own administration concluded that the 2020 election was one of the safest in history. His lawyers were laughed out of courts, many by Republican judges—some by judges he appointed, that Trump appointed. But he kept saying it anyway. He lied over and over and over again. Donald Trump lied over and over and over again, poisoning our democracy, lighting a fire beneath Republican State legislatures, which immediately launched the most sweeping voter suppression effort in years.

Just a note, how despicable a man is Donald Trump. He lost an election legitimately. He can't face that—that it was his failure. And he creates a lie—a Big Lie—and wins so many people over to that lie with the help of news media and other news commentators who are lying, as well, and they know it.

Again, Donald Trump, with his despicable lies, has lit a fire beneath Republican State legislatures, and they

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

have launched the most sweeping voter suppression efforts in at least 80 years.

More than 250 bills in 43 States were introduced just between the months of January and February that would restrict the right to vote. Do you want to know how many were introduced during a similar period of time last year, the year before Donald Trump was telling the Big Lie? Thirty-five. Thirty-five in 2020 and more than 250 in 2021.

Today, in June, there have been nearly 400 bills introduced. The only thing that changed between 2020 and 2021 was Donald Trump's Big Lie about massive fraud.

And now in States like Georgia and Iowa and Florida and Montana, these proposals are becoming law under the vicious guise of election integrity. The words ''election integrity'' aren't a guise. There is nothing vicious about them. The way Republican legislatures are using those words is vicious and a guise, a falsehood, fake.

I want my Republican colleagues—maybe, we can awaken their conscience, maybe, on something as sacred as voting rights. I want my Republican colleagues to listen to some of the policies that have been proposed by Republican State legislatures and tell me how they are about election integrity, how they are about suppressing fraud:

Reducing polling hours in polling places. How is that about election integrity? How does that reduce voter fraud?

Mandating that every precinct, no matter how large or small, have the same number of ballot drop boxes—a county of a million or a county of 1,000, the same number. How does that reduce fraud? What does that have to do with election integrity?

No after-hours voting, no 24-hour voting, no drive-through voting. What does that have to do with election fraud?

It certainly has everything to do with reducing people's right to vote and the ability to vote, but nothing to do with election fraud.

My Republican colleagues, how does making it a crime to give food or water to voters waiting in long lines at the polls deter voter fraud, which, really, we have found no evidence exists, to begin with—very little evidence?

By the way, in so many States, if you are African American, if you are inner city, if you are poor, if you are Brown, you have to wait a lot longer than if you are White and in the suburbs. Don't give them water. Don't allow them to have a drink as they are waiting in the hot Sun in line to vote. Yeah. What does that have to do with voter fraud? It has to do with cruelty, it has to do with nastiness, and it has to do with suppressing the vote.

Allowing a judge to overturn an election; allowing a partisan State election board to replace a duly elected county election board member if they are underperforming—what does that have to do with fraud? What does that have to do with fraud?

Removing student IDs from the list of valid forms of identification—that is election integrity? Bunk. We know what you are doing. You don't want students to vote. Yeah. Don't let students vote. Turn them off to the whole process, and make America even more alienated.

Delaying the hours of Sunday voting until the evening, which, coincidentally or not so coincidentally, by these Republican legislatures makes it harder for Black churchgoers to participate in voter drives after Sunday services—how despicable. Does that sound like Jim Crow, my Republican colleagues? It sure does to a lot of us.

I challenge my Republican colleagues. I challenge you, Republican Senators: Come to the floor. Defend these policies. Tell us how they secure the vote. Tell us how they prevent nearly nonexistent voter fraud. How does removing student IDs as a valid form of identification secure our elections? Do you have any evidence that 40-year-olds are showing up at the polls with fake student IDs? Come on, show us. How is criminalizing giving water or food to voters in a line a fraud prevention measure? You got any evidence of that? What arguments do Republicans have for restrictions on Sunday voting? That is what Texas Senators—Texas Republicans want to do. Do any of my colleagues actually have evidence that voter fraud is especially prevalent on the Lord's Day? Please. We know what you are up to. America knows what you are up to. And not to debate this? Are you afraid to debate it? Do you not have any good arguments?

Let's dispense with this nonsense. There is no real principle behind these policies. They are not about election integrity, and they are not about voter fraud. These policies have one purpose and one purpose only: making it harder for younger, poorer, non-White, and typically Democratic voters to access the ballot and to give Republicans a partisan advantage at the polls by making it harder for Democratic-leaning voters to vote.

You lose an election, you are not supposed to stop people from voting, even if they didn't vote for you. That is not democracy, my Republican friends. You lose an election, you are supposed to try harder to win over the voters you lost.

Republicans across the country are trying to stop the other side from voting. That tears and rips apart the very fabric of our democracy.

Disenfranchising millions of Americans is bad enough, but there is actually another sinister component of these voter suppression laws. In States like Arizona, Kansas, Arkansas, and Georgia, Republican legislatures are trying to give more power to themselves and other partisan bodies to undermine, override, and neuter bipartisan election boards and county-elected officials.

It has always been bipartisan. They didn't like the result. They lost fair and square. Get rid of the election board official when there is no evidence they did anything wrong. The cumulative effect will make it easier for followers of Trump's Big Lie, for partisan Republicans to rig the rules and try to overturn election results.

I read this article in the New York Times this weekend. You could weep from reading it. They reported that at least 10 members of county election boards in Georgia have been removed or are about to be removed in the wake of the new law passed by the GOP legislature. These are the folks who are in charge of selecting ballot drop box locations. They pointed out an African-American woman who made sure that a poor area had a drop box every year to allow people to vote. They want to kick her off the board. No one knows why. We do know why. There is no real, legitimate reason why. According to the Times, who are they kicking off? At least five are people of color, most are Democrats, and they are all most likely to be replaced by Republicans.

Please, my colleagues, read this article. Read this article on how Republican States are expanding their power over elections, by Nick Corasaniti and Reid J. Epstein, June 19, 2021. Read it. Can you read this article and still believe what Republican legislatures are doing is on the level? Can you read this article and believe they are not trying to jaundice and bias voting from what has traditionally been a process that is free and open and fair in many places—in most places? Read it. Just read it. It makes you want to weep what they are doing.

This nice lady, who just wanted to help her people vote in a fair and honest way, gets kicked off the board or is getting kicked off the board.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this full article from the New York Times dated June 19, 2021.

[From the New York Times, June 19, 2021]

HOW REPUBLICAN STATES ARE EXPANDING THEIR POWER OVER ELECTIONS

(By Nick Corasaniti and Reid J. Epstein)

In Georgia, Republicans are removing Democrats of color from local boards. In Arkansas, they have stripped election control from county authorities. And they are expanding their election power in many other states.

Lonnie Hollis has been a member of the Troup County election board in West Georgia since 2013. A Democrat and one of two Black women on the board, she has advocated Sunday voting, helped voters on Election Days and pushed for a new precinct location at a Black church in a nearby town.

But this year, Ms. Hollis will be removed from the board, the result of a local election law signed by Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican. Previously, election board members were selected by both political parties, county commissioners and the three biggest municipalities in Troup County. Now, the G.O.P.-controlled county commission has the sole authority to restructure the board and appoint all the new members.

''I speak out and I know the laws,'' Ms. Hollis said in an interview. ''The bottom line is they don't like people that have some type

of intelligence and know what they're doing, because they know they can't influence them.''

Ms. Hollis is not alone. Across Georgia, members of at least 10 county election boards have been removed, had their position eliminated or are likely to be kicked off through local ordinances or new laws passed by the state legislature. At least five are people of color and most are Democrats—though some are Republicans—and they will most likely all be replaced by Republicans.

Ms. Hollis and local officials like her have been some of the earliest casualties as Republican-led legislatures mount an expansive takeover of election administration in a raft of new voting bills this year.

G.O.P. lawmakers have also stripped secretaries of state of their power, asserted more control over state election boards, made it easier to overturn election results, and pursued several partisan audits and inspections of 2020 results.

Republican state lawmakers have introduced at least 216 bills in 41 states to give legislatures more power over elections officials, according to the States United Democracy Center, a new bipartisan organization that aims to protect democratic norms. Of those, 24 have been enacted into law across 14 states.

G.O.P. lawmakers in Georgia say the new measures are meant to improve the performance of local boards, and reduce the influence of the political parties. But the laws allow Republicans to remove local officials they don't like, and because several of them have been Black Democrats, voting rights groups fear that these are further attempts to disenfranchise voters of color.

The maneuvers risk eroding some of the core checks that stood as a bulwark against former President Donald J. Trump as he sought to subvert the 2020 election results. Had these bills been in place during the aftermath of the election, Democrats say, they would have significantly added to the turmoil Mr. Trump and his allies wrought by trying to overturn the outcome. They worry that proponents of Mr. Trump's conspiracy theories will soon have much greater control over the levers of the American elections system.

''It's a thinly veiled attempt to wrest control from officials who oversaw one of the most secure elections in our history and put it in the hands of bad actors,'' said Jena Griswold, the chairwoman of the Democratic Association of Secretaries of State and the current Colorado secretary of state. ''The risk is the destruction of democracy.''

Officials like Ms. Hollis are responsible for decisions like selecting drop box and precinct locations, sending out voter notices, establishing early voting hours and certifying elections. But the new laws are targeting high-level state officials as well, in particular secretaries of state—both Republican and Democratic—who stood up to Mr. Trump and his allies last year.

Republicans in Arizona have introduced a bill that would largely strip Katie Hobbs, the Democratic secretary of state, of her authority over election lawsuits, and then expire when she leaves office. And they have introduced another bill that would give the Legislature more power over setting the guidelines for election administration, a major task currently carried out by the secretary of state.

Under Georgia's new voting law, Republicans significantly weakened the secretary of state's office after Brad Raffensperger, a Republican who is the current secretary, rebuffed Mr. Trump's demands to ''find'' votes. They removed the secretary of state as the chair of the state election board and relieved the office of its voting authority on the board.

Kansas Republicans in May overrode a veto from Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat, to enact laws stripping the governor of the power to modify election laws and prohibiting the secretary of state, a Republican who repeatedly vouched for the security of voting by mail, from settling election-related lawsuits without the Legislature's consent.

And more Republicans who cling to Mr. Trump's election lies are running for secretary of state, putting a critical office within reach of conspiracy theorists. In Georgia, Representative Jody Hice, a Republican who voted against certifying President Biden's victory, is running against Mr. Raffensperger. Republican candidates with similar views are running for secretary of state in Nevada, Arizona and Michigan.

''In virtually every state, every election administrator is going to feel like they're under the magnifying glass,'' said Victoria Bassetti, a senior adviser to the States United Democracy Center.

More immediately, it is local election officials at the county and municipal level who are being either removed or stripped of their power.

In Arkansas, Republicans were stung last year when Jim Sorvillo, a three-term state representative from Little Rock, lost re-election by 24 votes to Ashley Hudson, a Democrat and local lawyer. Elections officials in Pulaski County, which includes Little Rock, were later found to have accidentally tabulated 327 absentee ballots during the vote-counting process, 27 of which came from the district.

Mr. Sorvillo filed multiple lawsuits aiming to stop Ms. Hudson from being seated, and all were rejected. The Republican caucus considered refusing to seat Ms. Hudson, then ultimately voted to accept her.

But last month, Arkansas Republicans wrote new legislation that allows a state board of election commissioners—composed of six Republicans and one Democrat—to investigate and ''institute corrective action'' on a wide variety of issues at every stage of the voting process, from registration to the casting and counting of ballots to the certification of elections. The law applies to all counties, but it is widely believed to be aimed at Pulaski, one of the few in the state that favor Democrats.

The author of the legislation, State Representative Mark Lowery, a Republican from a suburb of Little Rock, said it was necessary to remove election power from the local authorities, who in Pulaski County are Democrats, because otherwise Republicans could not get a fair shake.

''Without this legislation, the only entity you could have referred impropriety to is the prosecuting attorney, who is a Democrat, and possibly not had anything done,'' Mr. Lowery said in an interview. ''This gives another level of investigative authority to a board that is commissioned by the state to oversee elections.''

Asked about last year's election, Mr. Lowery said, ''I do believe Donald Trump was elected president.''

A separate new Arkansas law allows a state board to ''take over and conduct elections'' in a county if a committee of the legislature determines that there are questions about the ''appearance of an equal, free and impartial election.''

In Georgia, the legislature passed a unique law for some counties. For Troup County, State Representative Randy Nix, a Republican, said he had introduced the bill that restructured the county election board—and will remove Ms. Hollis—only after it was requested by county commissioners. He said he was not worried that the commission, a partisan body with four Republicans and one Democrat, could exert influence over elections.

''The commissioners are all elected officials and will face the voters to answer for their actions,'' Mr. Nix said in an email.

Eric Mosley, the county manager for Troup County, which Mr. Trump carried by 22 points, said that the decision to ask Mr. Nix for the bill was meant to make the board more bipartisan. It was unanimously supported by the commission.

''We felt that removing both the Republican and Democratic representation and just truly choose members of the community that invest hard to serve those community members was the true intent of the board,'' Mr. Mosley said. ''Our goal is to create both political and racial diversity on the board.''

In Morgan County, east of Atlanta, Helen Butler has been one of the state's most prominent Democratic voices on voting rights and election administration. A member of the county board of elections in a rural, Republican county, she also runs the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda, a group dedicated to protecting the voting rights of Black Americans and increasing their civic engagement.

But Ms. Butler will be removed from the county board at the end of the month, after Mr. Kemp signed a local bill that ended the ability of political parties to appoint members.

''I think it's all a part of the ploy for the takeover of local boards of elections that the state legislature has put in place,'' Ms. Butler said. ''It is them saying that they have the right to say whether an election official is doing it right, when in fact they don't work in the day to day and don't understand the process themselves.''

It's not just Democrats who are being removed. In DeKalb County, the state's fourth-largest, Republicans chose not to renominate Baoky Vu to the election board after more than 12 years in the position. Mr. Vu, a Republican, had joined with Democrats in a letter opposing an election-related bill that eventually failed to pass.

To replace Mr. Vu, Republicans nominated Paul Maner, a well-known local conservative with a history of false statements, including an insinuation that the son of a Georgia congresswoman was killed in ''a drug deal gone bad.''

Back in LaGrange, Ms. Hollis is trying to do as much as she can in the time she has left on the board. The extra precinct in nearby Hogansville, where the population is roughly 50 percent Black, is a top priority. While its population is only about 3,000, the town is bifurcated by a rail line, and Ms. Hollis said that sometimes it can take an exceedingly long time for a line of freight cars to clear, which is problematic on Election Days.

''We've been working on this for over a year,'' Ms. Hollis said, saying Republicans had thrown up procedural hurdles to block the process. But she was undeterred.

''I'm not going to sit there and wait for you to tell me what it is that I should do for the voters there,'' she said. ''I'm going to do the right thing.''

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, my Republican friends are fond of saying that they just want to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat in an election. But when you look at what they are actually doing, it is spectacularly obvious that Republicans are making it harder to vote and easier to steal an election. The Big Lie that started with Donald Trump is infecting them—infecting them. Lies don't matter, and they don't matter when it comes to the sacred process of elections—free, open, fair elections where everyone has an opportunity to vote.

Do my colleagues forget? Remember what Donald Trump did? Was he interested in a free, open, fair election? Donald Trump tried to pressure local officials to overturn a democratic election in America. It was a stress test on our democracy unlike any in recent history, but our institutions held. So now what do Republicans want to do? Change the results. Change the election officials.

Again, Trump tried to pressure local officials to overturn democratic elections in a huge stress test on our democracy. Our institutions held. Local officials certified election results. The courts rejected spurious claims of fraud. Vice President Pence, no less, opened the proper envelopes. The House and Senate came together to count the results of the electoral college in the immediate aftermath of an armed insurrection.

Now—now—because they couldn't win the election and our institutions, our democratic—small ''d,'' democratic—institutions held, they want to change who is running the elections to be partisan and biased. Republican State legislatures are actively removing many of the barriers that prevented Donald Trump from subverting our elections. Shame. Shame. Shame.

I lay all this information at the feet of my Republican colleagues: a sweeping effort to disenfranchise millions of voters, mostly Black and Brown students, the working poor; an attack on the checks that held our democracy together in the face of Donald Trump's assaults. Many of us wondered: Will these institutions hold? Would Trump-appointed judges tell the Trump lawyers that they were full of bunk and there wasn't fraud? They did. It was a glorious moment for our democracy, and the Republican majority here in the Senate wants to undo it and doesn't even want to debate it.

We can argue what should be done to protect voting rights and safeguard our democracy, but don't you think we should be able to debate the issue? The vote tomorrow is on, to my people watching. It is called a motion to proceed. It is how we get bills on the floor of the Senate. It needs 60 votes to be able to be debated. Will our Republicans let us debate it? That is the only question on the table for the U.S. Senate tomorrow, and we are about to find out how my Republican colleagues will answer that question.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, later this week, President Biden will meet with leaders of the Afghanistan civilian democratic government. It doesn't take an administrative leak to know what will be on the agenda.

President Ghani and Chairman Abdullah Abdullah will arrive in Washington as a grave situation in their country rapidly deteriorates.

The strategic and moral consequences of President Biden's decision to abandon Afghanistan are already coming painfully into focus. Without air cover and with reduced support from the U.S.-led coalition, our Afghan partners are struggling to hold back the Taliban onslaught.

In just the 2 months since the President's announcement, extremist militants have retaken control of at least 30—30—of Afghanistan's administrative districts. Reports from the ground indicate that their heavy-handed, medieval rule is already creating new nightmares, especially for Afghan women and girls. And just last week, more than 20 of the elite, U.S.-trained special forces, who represent the country's best hope of resistance, were literally slaughtered in a Taliban raid. So it is getting harder and harder to believe that ''over-the-horizon'' support will be enough to help our Afghan partners sustain the fight against these terrorist threats. It is already clear it would intensify challenges to our own national security.

This spring, the intelligence community warned that the Taliban was ''likely to make gains on the battlefield.'' As the Director of the CIA put it, ''ability to collect and act on threats will diminish.'' Now senior defense officials are portraying follow-on threats like the resurgence of al-Qaida as not a matter of if but when.

Last week, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs acknowledged that al-Qaida still seeks to directly threaten the United States and that it could have the necessary capabilities to do so in 2 years—or even less in the case of a Taliban victory in Kabul.

They want to know how we plan to support their defensive campaign without the air support that literally saves soldiers' lives. They want to know how we plan to contribute to urgent counterterrorism missions without a robust system for collecting intelligence on the ground. And if President Biden is unwilling to reverse course, they want to know who will help protect their fellow citizens forced to flee by the Taliban's conquest.

The State Department is not prepared to efficiently process visa claims from the many Afghans who have worked closely with our personnel, let alone the massive flows of refugees already on the move. Where are the friends of America to turn? Where will they turn?

It is time for President Biden to acknowledge the consequences of his decision: that a refugee crisis in Afghanistan will mean senseless suffering; that the collapse of the Afghan state will mean a security and economic crisis across the region, a crisis America and its partners will simply be unable to ignore; that the fallout of our retreat will draw attention and resources away from even greater strategic threats from Russia and China; and that every bit of it would have been avoidable, totally avoidable.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Madam President, on another matter, as I have noted before, Senate Democrats entered June with an agenda that was designed to fail. Our Democratic leader planned votes on a host of the left's most radical priorities. None of it was ever intended to clear the Senate's appropriately high bar for advancing legislation. Instead, the failure of their partisan agenda was meant to show somehow—somehow—that the Senate itself was failing.

For months, our colleagues built anticipation for the failure. They even started previewing the latest argument they have made when it happened. Apparently, the same Senate rule a Democratic minority had used with abandon was now somehow a racist relic to be abandoned by a Democratic majority.

In the end, one particular radical proposal took priority. S. 1 is the same bad bill it has been since the House introduced its version back in 2019 with the same nakedly partisan motives. But ever since Democrats got the election outcome they wanted last fall, we have watched our colleagues actually update the rationale for their latest partisan power grab: States must be stopped from exercising control over their own election laws.

The arguments here have one big thing in common with the ones our colleagues have deployed against the filibuster: debunked claims of racism.

Remember, the last Presidential election saw the highest voter turnout in decades, even amidst a once-in-a-century pandemic, and African-American turnout was twice as high in Mississippi as it was in Massachusetts. But when Georgia passed targeted updates to its election laws based on lessons learned during the pandemic-era elections, Democrats trashed the bill as a ''redux of Jim Crow.'' They misrepresented its contents so wildly that even left-leaning ''fact-checks'' repeatedly debunked these claims. But by then, the train of disinformation had left the station. Pretty soon, any State that dared to deviate from unique, pandemic-era procedures faced summary judgment in the court of liberal outrage. It hasn't seemed to matter that the facts tell a different story.

The bill that led Texas Democrats to exercise the rights of a legislative minority last month requires more counties to adhere to new minimum hours for early voting. The Oklahoma bill that expanded early voting for general elections was passed by a Republican legislature and signed by a Republican Governor. In my State of Kentucky, the expansion of both online registration and early voting this spring passed

on a bipartisan basis, and a Democratic Governor signed it.

Democrats have continued to insist that S. 1 is a response to these State laws, but we know it actually predates them. And we are starting to see that our colleagues' latest rationale for S. 1 can be flexible when needed. Prominent Democrats have railed against voter ID requirements for years, but now that voter ID is among the sticking points keeping the Democratic caucus from uniting behind S. 1, some Democrats have started indicating, well, they have had a change of heart. Now, I would commend them for coming around to commonsense positions on that issue that 80 percent of Americans already support. But one supposed compromise, among some Democrats, bears more than a passing resemblance to the partisan power grab their party has touted for years. It even introduces its own disastrous new liabilities, like a proposal to automate redistricting that is certainly constitutionally dubious.

At the end of the day, Madam President, which concocted crisis Democrats choose as justification for their top legislative priority actually doesn't make much difference. They have made abundantly clear that the real driving force behind S. 1 is a desire to rig the rules of American elections permanently—permanently—in the Democrats' favor. That is why the Senate will give this disastrous proposal no quarter.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Christopher Charles Fonzone, of Pennsylvania, to be General Counsel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was October of 2002. I remember the day when in the Senate we decided to vote on the question as to whether or not we would authorize President Bush to use military force in Afghanistan. We considered the issue of Iraq before. Twenty-three of us had voted against giving that authority to President Bush.

When it came to Afghanistan, the argument was different. The argument was that those responsible for 9/11, for killing 3,000 innocent Americans, were hiding out in Afghanistan, and if we didn't ferret them out of their hiding place and hold them accountable, what kind of nation would we be? I bought that argument. Virtually every Member of Congress agreed, with one exception—Congresswoman BARBARA LEE of California. But we voted to use military force in Afghanistan under extraordinary circumstances in 2002.

Now, I listened to the Republican leader come to the floor and accuse President Biden of abandoning Afghanistan, retreating from Afghanistan. And he leaves out some salient facts. The negotiation with the Taliban, which was initiated by President Trump, was a negotiation to determine who would be in power, what areas they would hold, and when the United States would leave. It was President Trump who initiated that negotiation, not President Biden. President Biden, when he took office, followed through with it. I applauded him for doing so.

I realize—and I think everyone does—that the situation in Afghanistan is perilous, but I think that we ought to acknowledge the obvious. After the longest war in the history of the United States, after losing over a thousand American lives and tens of thousands wounded, after spending trillions of dollars, we were not winning in Afghanistan. We didn't have a winning hand or a winning strategy. The Taliban was still a viable political force, and the Afghan security forces many times were overwhelmed by that Taliban force.

I wonder why the Republican leader from Kentucky doesn't do the obvious. He has the authority, under the rules of the Senate, to introduce a measure authorizing the use of military force in Afghanistan. If he believes we should stay or send more troops there, that is his right. He can offer that on the floor of the Senate, instead of lamenting what has happened there. He has the authority. If he thinks we have abandoned the Afghan people and should go back into that country, why doesn't he offer an authorization for use of military force?

I think we know the answer. There is little or no support on his side of the aisle, nor on this side of the aisle, to make the longest war in American history even longer. Yes, we should be a viable force to try to make certain the Afghan people have a fighting chance. But after almost 20 years at it, I think we have shown that our strategy was not the winning strategy.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, on a different subject, as our Nation continues to emerge from COVID–19 restrictions, vaccinated Americans were able to gather safely this past weekend for two happy events: Father's Day and the first Juneteenth Federal holiday. These celebrations came at the end of a week that brought welcome news to America.

After 11 years of Republicans fighting the Affordable Care Act, the Supreme Court finally said: Enough. Millions of Americans have health insurance at a time when they desperately need it, in the midst of a pandemic, and your theories on Constitution and law are not adequate to end the Affordable Care Act. Thank goodness for that 7–2 ruling.

The administration, of course, was heartened by that and by the knowledge that we are fast approaching the point where 70 percent of the adults in America are going to be vaccinated.

Remember when President Biden took office 6 months ago? Yes, we had the vaccines, but we hadn't produced them in quantity, and we didn't have a plan for vaccinating America. Thank goodness, now the United States is leading the world in the effort to vaccinate its population. I thank President Biden for that and the resources that we provided to him.

We still have a challenge. We still have a threat. The Delta variant is much more easily spread than the COVID strain that shut down the Nation last year. It has now been identified in 41 States. For those who are holding back and not seeking a vaccination, they are in greater danger than they were a year ago if that infection comes near them. I hope my Republican colleagues will join the Democrats in urging Americans to be vaccinated as quickly as possible.

WAR ON DRUGS

On a different topic, Madam President, last week marked the 50-year anniversary of President Nixon's declaration of a War on Drugs. Today, America imprisons a greater share of its population than any nation on Earth. Drugs are cheaper and more easily available than ever, and substance abuse is destroying more American families than ever. The greatest harm has fallen on our most vulnerable citizens, particularly low-income Americans and communities of color.

During the first four decades of the Nixon War on Drugs, America's Federal prison population grew by 700 percent, and the cost of operating Federal prisons exploded by 1,100 percent. Today, nearly half the people in Federal prisons are locked up due to drug-related charges. We are learning the hard way that we can't jail our way out of a public health crisis.

In recent years, the Senate has come together on a significant bipartisan basis to correct some of the gravest mistakes on the War on Drugs. I am grateful to my friend, the ranking Republican member on the Judiciary Committee, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, for his leadership in this effort. We forged a bipartisan partnership that ended up sending the First Step Act, a reform effort, to President Bush to sign into law—pardon me—sent to President Trump to sign into law.

Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on another crucial piece of reform: Eliminating the disparate treatment of

crimes involving crack and powder cocaine in Federal sentencing laws. Congress established this disparity in the 1980s, based on fear and mistaken illusions of science.

We reduced the disparity with the Fair Sentencing Act, but we didn't eliminate it. Today a person arrested for 28 grams of crack will receive the same sentence as a person with 500 grams of cocaine powder, even though it is exactly the same drug.

This lingering disparity made racial inequities in our criminal justice system even worse, undermined faith in the integrity of our justice system, and, worst of all, failed to even curb drug addiction in America—talk about three strikes. We should eliminate the disparity once and for all, and there will be a hearing tomorrow.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

On another matter, Madam President, tomorrow our democracy will face one of its greatest tests in the Senate. On January 7, at close to 4 o'clock in the morning, this Senate voted to confirm the electoral victory of Joe Biden to be the next President of the United States, but we all know what happened before that vote. An angry, self-pitying man who would not accept defeat, we now know, schemed for weeks about how to overturn the election and continue his Presidency. When Donald Trump's efforts failed and democracy prevailed, he begged a mob to come to Washington and deliver him from reality. You have seen the videos, the films—the President standing with the White House in a background, railing to this crowd about an election that was ''stolen,'' urging them to come to Capitol Hill and make a difference. He demanded that they come and ''stop the steal,'' and then he turned that mob on the Capitol of the United States. Those of us who were here that day will never forget it.

The outrageous insurrection that followed was the worst attack on this building and the most prolonged siege of the Capitol since the British attacked our Capitol in the War of 1812. Five people died, and more than 140 police officers were injured. It could have been worse. Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, Republican of South Carolina, was right when he said the day after the attack that that mob ''could have killed us all.''

The assault on the Capitol left our Nation shaken and the world in disbelief that it could happen in America. But it was not what one group of Washington power peddlers worried about most when they gathered on a conference call 2 days later. These Washington insiders scheduled a private conference call just 2 days after this attack on the Capitol. They were scrambling to come up with a plan to kill a democracy reform bill. The call was organized by the Koch brothers. Among the participants was a key member of Senator MCCONNELL's staff.

A recording of the conference call found its way to Jane Mayer, an investigative reporter for The New Yorker magazine, who wrote about it. According to Ms. Mayer's reporting, the reason the political insiders and special interests in that call were frightened was because they couldn't find a way to beat S. 1.

The Koch brothers group poll-tested criticisms of the bill, and none worked. It wasn't just the Democrats who liked the reforms in that bill. It turned out the Republicans liked them, too. According to a Koch representative who hosted the meeting, ''There's a large—very large—chunk of conservatives who are supportive of these types of reforms.'' Surprise, surprise.

What is a poor political insider to do when you can't manufacture a reason to vote against a bill? There is only one way to stop it, and it is what the people in the meeting referred to as ''under the dome strategies'' to stop this electoral reform bill. Do you know what that is? That is the filibuster—the ''killibuster''—that Senate procedure which requires 60 votes. They knew they couldn't win a majority, but they knew it was tough to come up with 60 votes in favor. And that is what I am afraid we are going to see tomorrow. I hope not.

Last night, I watched with many Americans as the movie ''Selma'' was televised. It reminded us of what happened in the 1960s when people like my personal friend and hero to many of us, John Lewis, marched across that bridge in Selma, AL, trying to speak up for what? Voting rights for African Americans. He was beaten and bloodied and almost died in the process, but they mustered the strength to come back again and to resume the march. And they prevailed. In passing the Voting Rights Act, which gave a fighting chance for African Americans and other people to be able to vote in the future of America.

This still is a challenge for us today. Why? I don't know. We have seen, in the recent past, six or seven Republicans publicly break with Donald Trump in some of his more outrageous positions, and yet they have been strangely silent on that side of the aisle when it comes to what is happening in States across the Nation where we have measures taking place that will limit the right of people to vote.

What is wrong with this picture? Is democracy not at its strongest point when more people are participating? And yet Republican legislatures write bill after bill to limit those who can vote in the future.

Madam President, I want to say a word or two about my colleague Senator JOE MANCHIN. I want to thank him for his determined efforts to find a compromise on the bill that is coming before us. Senator MANCHIN spoke to everyone in sight—Republicans, Democrats, Independents, liberals, and conservatives—and he listened. The compromise he proposed is not inclusive of everything I would like to see in the bill, but the reality is that it would be an improvement. It would help address the dangerous, all-out assault on voting rights that is taking place in all these States that I mentioned. It could help put Jim Crow back in the grave, where he belongs. And it deserves the support of the Senate.

My last word before I close. I had the honor of serving with Senator Robert Byrd. He used to sit back here. He once told me, in his illustrious Senate career, the things he was embarrassed by the most. He talked about deregulation of airlines, which took the planes out of his State of West Virginia. He talked about a nominee for the Eisenhower Cabinet who was rejected because he was Jewish. He told me he was wrong in the way he voted on those measures. But he said: Mr. DURBIN, more than anything, I was wrong on civil rights.

Madam President, this past Saturday was not only Juneteenth, it was the 57th anniversary of the Senate's passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It had been filibustered for 2 months before it passed. Opposition to the bill wasn't divided along party lines. I will be honest. My party, the Democratic Party, particularly southern members of the party, was leading the fight against it.

On June 8, 1964, one of the most conservative Democrats stood on the floor with an 800-page speech filled with all kinds of reasoning about why civil rights was unnecessary and an infringement on States' rights—an echo of a speech we just heard on the Senate floor. That Senator's name was Robert C. Byrd. He spoke on this floor for 14 hours and 13 minutes. When he finished, the majority leader called the roll, and 71 Senators voted to end the filibuster—4 more than were needed. Ten days later, on Juneteenth 1964, the Senate passed the Civil Rights Act. On July 2, it passed the House and was signed by President Johnson.

Robert C. Byrd would go on to serve for another 46 years in this Senate and become majority leader twice and the longest serving Senator in history. He later called his filibuster of the Civil Rights Act ''the worst mistake of my life,'' a decision which he told me personally he deeply regretted. He would change. He would begin to champion civil rights.

When President George W. Bush signed the law extending voting rights in 2006, it was Robert C. Byrd by his side in the Oval Office, along with Ted Kennedy and John Lewis.

When Robert Byrd died in 2010, John Lewis mourned him and called him an ally and ''true statesman.'' Yet, despite all the years that had passed and all the good he had accomplished, many articles on his death stated that he once stood against civil rights.

If the last year has taught us anything, it is that life is fragile. None of knows how long we have in this Senate or on this Earth. So I implore my colleagues who may be wrestling with how to vote tomorrow: This is a vote for

history. This is democracy on trial. Think about how you want to be remembered by your children's children.

If democracy is worth fighting for, even worth dying for, surely a democracy reform bill is worthy of debate in the Senate. Allow the Senate to do its job and debate the For the People Act.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mrs. SHAHEEN and Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2146 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

JUNETEENTH

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last week, Congress notched another bipartisan win for the American people.

A bill I reintroduced earlier this year, along with Senator MARKEY from Massachusetts, was signed into law finally establishing Juneteenth as a national holiday. This bill was unanimously supported in the Senate and got an overwhelming vote in the House of Representatives.

I was honored to be with President Biden at the White House when he signed it into law late last week. It was even more special to celebrate with my fellow Texans over the weekend. On Saturday, I was honored to spend the very first Juneteenth National Independence Day in Galveston, where Major General Gordon Granger and his troops declared that all slaves were ''forever free.''

This happened 2½ years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed and just a couple of months after hostilities between the North and the South had ended, but communication being what it is across the huge country, particularly at that time, it took 2½ years for the message to get to the former slaves in Galveston, TX, where Juneteenth has been celebrated for many, many years.

In my State alone, we celebrated Juneteenth for 40 years as a State holiday. I could not have been more happy to take a piece of history with me, a copy of the bipartisan bill that helped preserve the legacy of Juneteenth for generations to come.

This is just one item in a significant list of bipartisan accomplishments we have made in an equally divided Senate, which we all know is no small thing. We passed legislation to confront the growing threats of China; to ensure more businesses can grab onto the lifeline of the Paycheck Protection Program, one of the most significant items of economic assistance that we were able to provide during the COVID–19 virus; we provided States with additional resources to upgrade their drinking water and wastewater infrastructure; and we passed legislation to combat hate crimes against Asian Americans.

So the truth is, notwithstanding what it may look like in the news or on cable TV or on social media, every day, our colleagues here in the Senate continue to work across the aisle to find consensus and to craft legislation with bipartisan support where we can. I tell people that legislation is hard to pass by design, and our current rules require us to do the hard work of actually building consensus on a bipartisan basis before we can pass legislation, particularly in the Senate.

We continue to do our work in other important areas like infrastructure, which has been the subject of so much attention and debate; to do police reform; to deal with the high price of prescription drugs. Republicans and Democrats continue to work together to address some of our most urgent problems.

This week, unfortunately, the majority leader, the Senator from New York, has decided to take another tack. He has chosen to spend the Senate's time on partisan legislation that simply has no chance of becoming law. That is his choice. He gets to set the agenda, and our only role is to show up, debate the bill, and cast our ballot.

Our Democratic colleagues have given the marquee treatment, a bill known as S. 1, with the symbolic numbering of the bill as the first, meaning the most important bill in their agenda. But rather than a bipartisan bill that will be good for the entire country, not just one political party or the other, the majority leader has chosen to tee up this massive Federal election takeover bill.

This legislation first popped in 2019, when the newly elected Democratic majority in the House went on a messaging bill spree. A messaging bill is one that you really know will never become law, but it sends a message. Over the last 2 years, they tried out a range of different marketing strategies. That is really all it is. It is not about passing legislation. It is about sending a message, trying to gain partisan political advantage.

They tried a range of marketing strategies to convince the American people that this overhaul to our election system is necessary. At one point, it was a matter of election security, then of voter confidence, then a way to remove obstacles that prevented people of color from voting.

Well, I have some news for them. In 2020, we saw a record election turnout. Two-thirds of all eligible voters cast a ballot. That was the highest turnout in 120 years. It wasn't confined to any single racial or ethnic group; it was across the board. We saw African-American voter participation at virtually an all-time high—the same with Hispanics and every other ethnic and racial group.

Notwithstanding the facts that people are turning out to vote in historic numbers, they had to come up with a new sales pitch. They had to attack the efforts in the States to pass their own election laws, which handle the time and manner in which State elections are run. And, to me, the consistent theme was making it easier to vote and harder to cheat. To me, that is the simple message I think we ought to be sending when it comes to our election laws. That is what our colleagues latched onto.

But over the last few months, they twisted and turned and manipulated the facts beyond any recognition. They tried to frame new State voting laws as the impetus or the reason justifying this massive Federal takeover—unconstitutional, in my view—takeover of State voting laws. They painted an alarming picture of the assault on voter access.

But if you actually take time to look at these so-called restrictions in voting, you will find they are more generous than the current law in many Democratic-controlled States. There is no better example than the Georgia law, which came under national scrutiny for enacting reforms that would give Georgia voters more time to vote than voters in a number of blue States.

Here are the facts. In Georgia, the law that people claimed was racist and designed to prevent people of color from casting their ballot during the early voting season before in-day—election-day voting—the new Georgia law provides 17 days for in-person early voting. How about Massachusetts, which is currently represented by two Democratic Senators? Well, Massachusetts provides 11 days. Delaware, represented by two Democrats and the home State of our President, provides 10 days of early voting. New Jersey, also represented by two Democratic Senators, provides 9 days, almost half of what Georgia has provided for in its new election laws.

But what you heard across the news media, cable TVs, social media, and the like was that somehow, some way, Georgia had conspired to restrict the rights of African Americans and other minority voters from casting their ballots.

But the facts prove otherwise. This is the type of hypocrisy that we are seeing in this debate. As I said, New Jersey recently passed a law—just recently passed a law that expanded in-person voting to 9 days. Did anyone claim that this was somehow a Jim Crow relic or a racist act or violating the rights of African Americans and other minority voters? Of course not. Was New Jersey treated the same as Georgia was in the popular media, where it was suggested that somehow this was a racist effort to restrict minority access to voting? Of course not.

But the New Jersey Governor took it a step further. He actually criticized

Georgia for what he called ''restricting the rights of Georgians to vote,'' but his own State provides half the opportunity that the new Georgia law does to cast your ballot. Obviously, this is a bunch of political talk and an attempt to try to intimidate Congress and the American people into this Federal takeover of the State election laws.

We heard similar attack lines from a number of our Democratic colleagues who will falsely try to brand this law as a form of voter suppression, even though it is more generous than current laws in a number of blue States.

Here are some more facts. You heard a lot of talk about mail-in ballots. The Georgia law sets a deadline of 11 days before the election to request a mail-in ballot, but in the State of the majority leader, Senator SCHUMER—New York—voters only receive a week. So you have 7 days prior to the election to request a mail-in ballot in New York and 11 days in Georgia. And for some reason, our Democratic colleagues focus on Georgia and claim this is some sort of conspiracy to diminish and restrict minority voting, which is clearly false. In New York, you also have to have a reason for voting absentee, but in Georgia no excuse needs to be given. You can do so as a matter of right, even if you are going to be in town, even if you are otherwise able to vote. If you find it more convenient to cast your ballot by mail in Georgia, you can do so—but not in New York.

If any State tries to enact policies that suppress the votes of minority voters, there is a law in place currently, section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, that gives the U.S. Government the right to sue that State or jurisdiction and make sure that minority voters have equal access to the ballot. As a matter of fact, the Voting Rights Act has been one of the most successful laws ever passed by a Federal Congress. And the historic turnout I referred to a few moments ago, I think, is the best evidence of that. Minority voters across the country are voting in historically high numbers, which, to me, is the best evidence that the Voting Rights Act is doing exactly what we had hoped it would do when we passed it and when we reauthorized it just a few short years ago.

So, if this isn't a solution to efforts to restrict minority voting, what exactly is this bill that we will be voting on tomorrow, S. 1? The truth is it is a partisan solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

This law, if passed, S. 1, which we will vote on tomorrow, prevents States from requiring identification from voters to vote. In other words, you won't have to show a driver's license or some other means of identification in order to cast your ballot. Yet, on the Jimmy Carter, James Baker, III commission—I think it was in 2005—it recommended voter ID as one of the important ways to maintain the integrity of the ballot so that the voting officials would know you are who you say you are, and, indeed, you could check your name against the voter rolls to make sure you were legally authorized to cast a ballot.

In Senator SCHUMER's effort to pass S. 1, which we will vote on tomorrow, it prevents the States from asking for voter identification even when virtually every State provides that identification card for free. If you don't drive, they will provide you with a free card, and you can use an alternative means of identification, but not if Senator SCHUMER's S. 1 bill were to pass.

This bill, S. 1, would also tie the States' hands when it comes to maintaining accurate voter rolls. So, if people have moved out of State or if voters have passed away, this law would tie the hands of the States to make sure those names would be removed from the voter rolls, which would make it more likely that fraudulent efforts to cast those ballots on behalf of voters who either didn't exist or had moved out of State would be possible.

S. 1 would tie the hands of the States from periodically purging dead voters from the voter rolls. This would also encourage something called ballot harvesting. Now, some States provide for ballot harvesting, but many, thankfully, do not. Ballot harvesting simply makes it possible for a partisan in a political campaign to go around and collect ballots—maybe at nursing homes, maybe at shopping malls, maybe at other places—and then deliver those ballots to the voting clerk at the designated place and time. Yet you can imagine if the chain of custody of those ballots is not traced and tracked and monitored. Just think of the opportunities that could provide for fraud.

This bill would also alter the makeup of the bipartisan Federal Election Commission, so as to give the Democratic Party an advantage. Right now, there are equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats on the Federal Election Commission, and that is the way it should be. Yet this bill, S. 1, would give the Democrats a partisan advantage—a big mistake.

Here is, maybe, the biggest insult to the taxpayer: Whether or not you support a particular political candidate or the platform that candidate runs on, you can be forced to contribute your tax dollars to that political candidate to help him run and win the election. This is the government funding—really, the taxpayer funding—of political campaigns. I believe it is a 2-to-6 ratio, if I am not mistaken. For every $2 that candidate raises, he gets $6 in taxpayer funding to run his campaign. That is your hard-earned money that you have paid in taxes that is being used to promote ideas and candidates whom you don't support.

I could go on and on, as the list of absurdities is a long one, but our friend the senior Senator from California summed it up pretty well earlier this month.

She said:

If democracy were in jeopardy, I would want to protect it. But I don't see it being in jeopardy right now.

Madam President, there is no voter suppression crisis—certainly not a systemic one. If there is a problem with suppressing minority votes, there is authority available under the Voting Rights Act for the Attorney General, appointed by Joe Biden and confirmed by this Senate, to be able to go after them. There is no widespread effort to stop voters from casting ballots, and there is no desire to hand the States' constitutional authorities over to the Federal Government.

Our Democratic colleagues are struggling to accept this reality. They have spent the last several days working behind the scenes to negotiate a compromise among themselves. There was never a question of whether or not this would be a bipartisan bill because of the overreach that I have just talked about. The question was whether or not the bipartisan opposition seen in the House would continue in the Senate.

Even if the Democrats were to accept all of the changes that have been proposed by Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia and that have been endorsed by Stacey Abrams, the rotten core of this bill would remain the same. This is a politically motivated, Federal takeover of our elections, and it will not stand. The Constitution doesn't give the Democratic Party or the Republican Party the power to govern how States run their elections. That is reserved to the States by the Constitution of the United States of America. I will firmly oppose any effort to hand Texas's constitutional rights to regulate and conduct its elections over to the Federal Government.

The one-size-fits-all Federal mandate won't improve public confidence in our elections. It will be seen for what it is in a transparent way, that being a partisan, political takeover—a coup d'etat, really—of the way our elections are run. Elections should be run by the folks who are elected and who are accountable to the States—and to my State of Texas—and certainly not by partisan, political actors with an agenda here in Washington, DC.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 172.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Deborah L. Boardman, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 172, Deborah L. Boardman, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Chris Van Hollen, Jacky Rosen, John Hickenlooper, Tammy Baldwin, Richard Blumenthal, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Raphael Warnock, Martin Heinrich, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bernard Sanders, Jeff Merkley, Patty Murray, Margaret Wood Hassan.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 128.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, of Illinois, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 128, Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, of Illinois, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Sherrod Brown, Jon Ossoff, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Tammy Duckworth, Brian Schatz, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Robert Menendez, Richard Blumenthal, Patty Murray, Martin Heinrich, Michael F. Bennet, Sheldon Whitehouse.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, June 21, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TALLAPOOSA COUNTY GIRLS RANCH

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, before I begin, I want to first take a moment and remember those that lost their lives in a horrific car accident in Butler County, AL, this past weekend.

Ten people lost their lives. Nine of those were between the ages 9 months and 17 years old. A majority of those killed were in a Tallapoosa County Girls Ranch bus. The girls ranch is an organization that I have been involved with for 20 years. It handles young kids who have been abused, young kids who have no parents. They start at this ranch at most any age, and everything is paid for all the way through graduation of college.

These kids were on a field trip coming from Baldwin County, AL, this past weekend and were involved in this horrific crash. There are no words that can bring comfort to these families or these children, but my family and my staff and the people of Alabama are praying for peace for all those affected during this unimaginable time.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Madam President, as I and others have noted, Democrats call their flagship voting bill For the People Act, but a better and more fitting title is the ''Nancy Pelosi Power Grab Act.''

My Republican colleagues have done a good job of highlighting the many flaws of this legislation in the last couple of weeks, including doing away with commonsense fraud protection like voter ID, forcing mandatory same-day registration on every State, allowing paid political operatives to harvest voter ballots, and directing taxpayer dollars to the campaigns of progressive politicians. Sadly, there is plenty more.

But let me also note that this recent ''compromise'' is anything but. A compromise among Democrats should have been their starting offer to Republicans, not their final offer.

The most recent versions still run afoul of the Constitution by trampling on First Amendment rights of free speech and taking away redistricting from the States. While ID is still required to vote, the bill expands what kind of ID meets that requirement, such as a utility bill. But the last time I looked, there was not a photo on our utility bill. The most secure form of identification is a government-issued photo ID. States shouldn't be forced to water that down.

Americans want faith and trust in the integrity of their election process. This bill does not provide solutions to strengthen these processes, and once Americans learn what is in this bill, they will agree.

The Pelosi power grab yanks power from the States. The Pelosi power grab lets politicians stuff their pockets with taxpayers' dollars. And guess what, folks. A slightly different version of a Federal takeover of elections is still a Federal takeover of elections. That is exactly what this new version of S. 1 is. It is hard to even call this version of S. 1 a compromise when the Democrats only compromise with Members of their own party. This was not a bipartisan negotiation to get an end product that both sides of the aisle could support. The last time I checked, we still have a 50–50 Senate. There has been no negotiation with our side.

But regardless of its form, this bill does not solve the problems currently facing our election system; it makes the problems worse.

You know, in sports, one team changing the rules by themselves is called cheating. It is seen for what it is—a power grab. It is stacking the rules to win the game instead of doing the hard work necessary to get the job done.

Folks may be scratching their heads as to why one political party thinks they can completely change the rules of elections all by themselves, but if you have been paying attention to what the progressives have been up to recently, it won't come as a big surprise. Changing our country as we know it is the end game. That is why they want to pass this Pelosi power grab—so those who disagree with them have a harder time winning at the ballot box.

But it is not just elections. Remember when they tried to hoodwink us with defund the police last year? Remember when they tried to walk that back? But they had made their position very clear. Now we are seeing the same thing with education, as critical race theory is pushed on school districts across the country. Simply put, critical race theory reinforces divisions on strict racial lines. It doesn't teach kids moral values, like treating everyone with respect regardless of race; it is just the opposite. Critical race theory teaches kids to hate one another. That is one thing schools should absolutely—absolutely—not be teaching. But, again, for Democrats, it is about changing the way we view our country.

What we should be focusing on is actually improving education all over this country. The American people need to realize how far we have fallen behind.

As columnist Mark Steyn wrote, ''Education is the biggest structural defect in our society. We have an almost entirely corrupt and abusive education establishment.''

Here is where that education establishment has gotten us: We are 37th in the world in math, 13th in reading, and 18th in science. In 2019, only 35 percent of our fourth graders were able to read at the fourth-grade reading level—35 percent. Embarrassing. That was lower than 2 years before, and it was before the teachers unions kept kids out of school all of this past year. You can imagine how it is today. It is unacceptable. It should be unacceptable to every Member of this body.

We have got China outpacing us in every industry and at every level of our economy. But Democrats are too busy painting the United States as the world's villain. How can we expect our young people to defend the United States abroad if they don't learn about the things that make America the greatest country in the history of the world?

We, as elected representatives of Americans across the country, should be doing everything—and I mean everything—we can to create opportunity and to protect the freedoms that make this country great. It seems like folks across the aisle aren't interested in that. They have a completely different vision of and for our country—one that most Americans don't agree with at all.

I bet if you ask folks back home if they want a bigger government and less State and local power, they would say no way. I bet if you asked them if a Federal power grab sounds like a good idea, they would say no. I bet if you ask them if they want their kids to learn to be more divided by race, they would also say no. They would tell you they want their freedoms protected. They would tell you they want the Federal Government out of the way. They want an education for children that provides opportunity because education is the key to freedom and success. Education can unlock every student's God-given potential, but critical race theory swallows that key. The Pelosi power grab just fills the lock with cement.

Ladies and gentlemen, this For the People Act is one party's attempt to rewrite the rules—rewrite the rules of the game in hope that they will get a permanent advantage, plain and simple.

It is really a shame. We are spending so much time on bills that the American people don't want, bills that don't have bipartisan support. So I urge my colleagues to come together and find solutions that will unite us as Americans, not divide us further as a country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HAGERTY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HAGERTY. Madam President, I am here today to address Democrats' deceptively labeled ''For the People Act,'' which should more accurately be labeled the ''For the Politicians Act.''

This legislation represents a breathtaking, unprecedented power grab. In a 50–50 Senate, this is a blatant attempt by those who are in power by the slimmest possible margin to take over and rewrite the election and campaign rules for all 50 States in one fell swoop.

This would be done on an entirely partisan basis to ensure candidates from that same party win elections. In fact, while the only supporters of the bill are Democrats, there is bipartisan opposition to this legislation.

This legislation would disenfranchise every American through the Federal seizure of the authority of each State's representatives to set election rules for their State in accordance with the wishes of their citizens.

This partisan legislation would wash away election integrity measures, making it easier to cheat. Each invalid vote cast dilutes the strength of each valid vote cast.

Our form of government for the people and by the people rests upon voters' faith in the integrity of our elections. If we allow that faith in our elections to continue to be compromised, we are allowing the very foundation of our American system to be eroded.

Democrats don't want to talk about the details of this legislation. They don't want you to peek under the hood. They want to just slap a voting rights bumper sticker on it, jam it through, and then disparage and name-call anyone who opposes it.

So let's take a look at exactly what is in this legislation.

Under this legislation, a Federal politician running for election can take millions in taxpayer money for his or her own campaign.

The legislation says that States must then allow that politician to pay political operatives to visit nursing homes, dormitories, emergency shelters, and other residences to collect thousands of ballots and, then, choose which ones to be dropped into unmanned drop boxes, maybe in the middle of the night.

This bill would make it illegal for States to verify the identity of voters at the polls. Under this bill, ballots arriving even a week after election day would still be counted.

It would require States to adopt universal mail-in voting practices. States would be forced to allow murderers, rapists, and child molesters to vote, even if a State's citizens have adopted laws to prevent it.

It would require States to allow unregistered voters to cast ballots by simply showing up on election day and signing a form, without an ID and with no vetting allowed.

The bill would silence political speech by religious and nonprofit organizations while politicians can use taxpayer dollars to air attack ads with which many Americans would find distasteful.

The bill provides that if anyone disputes any of this, that is OK. They can lodge their complaints with the Federal Election Commission, a body that has been bipartisan since its creation. But wait. In addition to changing the rules to benefit one team, the legislation also ''buys off the umpire'' by transforming the FEC into a partisan, Democrat-controlled body—a body that could hound the opposing party candidates to the ends of the Earth. This bill transforms the judge into the prosecutor.

I wish that was all this legislation did. It also snatches the responsibility for drawing Congressional districts from the elected representatives of all 50 States, who have done that job for the last 230 years, and sets up a Byzantine process that would ultimately hand it over to an academic consultant hired by a liberal judge right here in Washington.

Let me repeat that: A consultant hired by a judge in Washington, DC, will be drawing every congressional district in the country.

Using government power to seize control of elections, to limit speech, to pack tribunals, to ensure the ruling party stays in power—that sounds like a headline you would hear in Venezuela, Russia, Iran, or even China, not in the United States of America.

Not too long ago, both parties would have considered this partisan power grab beyond the pale. But far-left operatives want permanent power, and Democrats, eager to keep the power for themselves, are afraid to tell them no.

Democrats are now characterizing this legislation as an emergency response to recent legislation in a few States. This legislation isn't just a solution in search of a problem; it is a power grab that for years has been in search of a crisis—any crisis, manufactured or otherwise—that can be used to justify it.

Democrat operatives introduced a previous version of this bill on January 24, 2017, 4 days after President Trump took office. The purported crisis then was the American people's election of Donald Trump, which the Democrats found unacceptable. They continued this effort by introducing yet another version of the ''For the Politicians Act'' in 2019, which at that time passed the House without a single Republican vote. Like the bill the Senate will consider this week, this bill was a Democrat operative's electioneering fantasy—federalizing unlimited mail-in voting, prohibiting voter ID requirements, and allowing unregistered voters to show up and vote on election

day. Wisely, the Senate, in 2019, never took it up.

Then, as the pandemic took root in the spring of 2020, Democrats, in search of yet a new crisis to justify this bill, included it in a pandemic relief bill that the House passed—again, without a single Republican vote. Once again, the Senate dismissed it and wisely focused on providing bipartisan pandemic relief, rather than using the pandemic as a justification to federalize elections.

With the pandemic now in the rearview mirror, this legislation is being pitched as necessary to preserve voting rights, using cartoonish, overheated, and false characterizations of a few sensible, measured voting integrity laws that have recently been enacted by States. Why? Because Democrats have to invent a new crisis every 6 months or so to conceal this quest to install themselves permanently into power.

Don't let them fool you. This isn't about some State election law. The House passed virtually the same bill last year. Most of the components of this bill have been floating in Democrat National Committee back rooms for years.

This isn't about voting rights. This legislation protects voting rights like banning security guards at banks would protect bank depositors.

Now, why are the Democrats so desperate to pass this bill? Well, a recent report from POLITICO explains it. POLITICO says:

> What's at stake is . . . potentially the future Democratic majorities. Many in the party privately worry that frontline Democrats could lose their seats if Congress doesn't [pass this bill].

So, to keep power, Democrats have determined that they have to take over State elections. This is about holding on to power and nothing else. There doesn't seem to be a power grab that is too extreme for the modern left, whether it is this bill, legislation to pack the Supreme Court, suddenly changing their position and pushing to scrap fundamental Senate rules in order to obtain short-term political gains or adding Washington, DC, as a State. It is all about one thing—fulfilling a fantasy of permanent Democrat power.

Under this legislation, American elections would no longer be about earning the support of voters by communicating a powerful vision. Rather, American elections would be all about creating the largest machine, identifying favorable voters, and mass-gathering their ballots door-to-door as efficiently as possible.

The winning campaign would be the one with the largest army of ballot harvesters to drive voters—registered or unregistered, with or without ID—to fill out and hand over a ballot that will be ''dropped'' on their behalf in unmanned ballot boxes.

Americans want commonsense laws that make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. Such laws currently exist throughout the country. That is why we had recordbreaking voter participation in 2020, including in my State of Tennessee.

This legislation is as unnecessary as it is misguided and dangerous. It is a politician protection measure that would do irreparable damage to the fabric of this country, and it should be soundly rejected by this body.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, this Saturday was Juneteenth, the first official Juneteenth recognized by the Federal Government as a national holiday—the official end of slavery in America. I commemorated and celebrated Juneteenth with my colleague Senator VAN HOLLEN at a meeting of the NAACP chapter in Randallstown, MD, and we reflected on the progress that we have made since the end of slavery and the challenges that still remain.

It has been a long path toward justice and equality in this country, and I think we all recognize the wisdom of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with his famous quote that ''the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.''

I think we all believe that, but in recent actions taken by State governments to restrict voting rights, we see some very disturbing trends that would take issue with Dr. King's statement that the moral universe is bending toward justice. It seems like it has taken a detour.

Voting rights is a fundamental issue of importance to a democratic country.

After elections are over and we win, we celebrate. We celebrate the fact that we have gotten the support of the majority of the voters, and that is what democracy is all about. If we don't win—and I think many of us have been involved in campaigns where our candidates have not been successful—we go to work to try to attract more voters in the next election so we can celebrate a victory. That is what participation in a free society is all about. That is what democracies are about.

In repressive autocratic regimes, they will never accept the will of the people. So they look at ways in which they can undermine the voter record—what the voters want to do, the voters' will. In the 2020 election, we should all celebrate the record number of people who cast their ballots. It was a record—the most ever casting their votes for the Presidency of the United States. There were repeated reviews done by both Democrats and Republicans at the national level and at the State level and at the local level. It verified the simple fact that there was no widespread corruption, that the will of the people prevailed, and Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS were elected President and Vice President of the United States.

But that did not stop former President Trump in promoting the Big Lie. As a result of that, several States have now taken action to make it harder for people to cast their votes. The Brennan Center has pointed out that we have seen the worst assault on voting rights since Jim Crow. Fourteen States have enacted 22 new laws to make it more difficult—more difficult—for people to vote. This is unprecedented in modern times.

So what have those laws done? Made it more difficult for voters to vote by mail, recognizing that for many voters, they prefer to vote by mail. We have States that have 100 percent voting by mail. There has been no indication of fraud in voting by mail.

States have shortened the time for requesting mail-in ballots for voting, making it more difficult for individuals to be able to vote by mail, requiring certain requirements to vote by mail, making it more difficult to deliver their mail-in ballots, limiting the availability of mail ballot drop boxes. All of that had been included. Why? Because it makes it more difficult for people who are likely to vote for my opponent to vote. That is what the State legislatures are doing—stricter signature requirements, making in-person voting more difficult, and purging voter rolls simply because a person did not vote—again, making it more difficult for people to vote. And it goes on and on and on in the type of legislation that has already passed or is currently being considered by many State legislatures around the country, making it more difficult to register to vote, making it more difficult to vote, targeting potential voters more likely to vote for their opponents, targeting minorities, young voters, and older minority voters.

Let me give just one example. Using Georgia as a specific example, their recently enacted changes will disproportionately hurt Black voters. The Georgia State law imposes voter identification requirements on absentee ballots, makes it hard to request an absentee ballot, and makes it a crime for groups to provide food and water to voters waiting in line.

Georgia is basically restricting mail voting in response to a shift in the racial demographics of the voters who use it. On the other hand, Georgia wants to keep mail voting available for older, White mail voters.

Voter suppression is always unacceptable, and the razor-thin political margins in Georgia may mean that suppression efforts like these will change political outcomes. Rather than imposing barriers to casting the sacred right to vote, Georgia should be looking at ways to improve voter access.

As the New York Times pointed out, the Georgia law comes on the heels of a major upset for Republicans in the traditionally red State, after voters picked Joe Biden in the Presidential election and elected Democrats to both of the State's U.S. Senate seats. The paper noted that the new Georgia law ''will, in particular, curtail ballot access for voters in booming urban and suburban counties, home to many Democrats.'' President Biden was right to call this legislation the ''Jim Crow in the 21st century.''

There are many other examples. Georgia is not unique in the efforts we are seeing to suppress voter participation at elections.

Look, it is fair game to try to persuade voters to vote for your candidate. It is not fair game to suppress their right to vote.

So what is the vote this week all about, the vote we are going to have on bringing forward the opportunity to debate voter suppression legislation to protect the right to vote? It is simply a motion to proceed with a debate on the Senate floor. Let me repeat that. We are not voting on S. 1, the passage of it. We are not voting on any specific proposal. I know my friend from West Virginia has offered a proposal. We are not voting on that. We are voting on the right for the Senate to take up this critically important issue or whether it should be filibustered so we can't bring up a voter issue to protect the integrity of the right to vote.

Now, I support S. 1. I am a cosponsor of S. 1, For the People. I am proud to support the provisions of that bill. To me, it is carefully drafted legislation to deal with the modern threats to voter participation. I am extremely proud that my colleague from Maryland, Congressman JOHN SARBANES, is the principal sponsor of H.R. 1 in the House that already passed the House.

It provides a basic Federal floor on protection of the right to vote—on voter registration, on vote-by-mail, no-excuse balloting, 2 weeks of early voting, including weekends, no notary requirement for absentee ballots, drop-off boxes. That is a simple voter protection against the actions being taken by State legislatures that are aimed at certain demographic groups, a Federal floor.

It ends political gerrymandering. I don't know how any of my colleagues can defend the way legislative and congressional lines are drawn today. I came from the State legislature. I am a former speaker of the house. I was responsible for one of the redistricting plans of Maryland when I was speaker of the house. It is just a horrible, partisan, political process we use today to draw congressional lines.

I have been accused by my congressional colleagues in the House from Maryland that I ran for the Senate to avoid having to deal with congressional redistricting. There may be some truth to that, but I can tell you this: It is time to end political gerrymandering. Congressional districts should represent the communities' interests, not an individual Congressman's interest. S. 1 takes a major step forward in ending political congressional redistricting by gerrymandering.

It provides a commitment by Congress to advance a preclearance formula that was in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that now is not operative because of the Shelby County decision. It puts us on a path to once again have that important tool available in order to deal with the freedom and right to vote.

It promotes voter security, S. 1, by eliminating the paper ballot—by requiring the paper ballot, I should say, not eliminating it, by requiring a paper trail. I think we all agree that we want to be able to verify votes. The only way you can is if there is a paper trail, and it provides for that paper trail.

It puts an end to the dominance of big money in the political system. They do that in a couple of ways: one, disclosure—how can anyone be against the disclosure of who is putting money into our political system?—and secondly, providing a way in which we can get rid of the dependence upon large special interest dollars.

It includes, S. 1, two provisions that I authored. One is a deceptive practices act that deals with false or misleading advertisements which are aimed at targeting minority communities to confuse and mislead their votes.

It includes the Democracy Restoration Act, which I authored, which deals with laws passed after the end of slavery in an effort to prevent African Americans from voting, for, you see, there are States that passed laws back then that are still on the books that disqualify for a lifetime a person convicted of a felony.

The definition of ''felony'' is pretty general in many States, so we have States where one out of five African Americans has been disqualified from voting because of their conviction of a felony. Even though they are fully part of our society today, they don't have the right to vote. We need to remove that disqualification on voting.

My friend, our former colleague, John Lewis—the two of us were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives on the same day. In an editorial published after his death, our former colleague John Lewis recalled an important lesson taught by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and I quote our former colleague:

> He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part.

Well, we cannot take action if we don't start, and we can't start unless my colleagues allow us to proceed to this issue on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

There is a reason why there are so many groups behind us taking action. I have a Facebook Live that I do every 2 weeks with my constituents. Jana Morgan from the Declaration for American Democracy, which represents over 180 groups, from labor to racial justice groups, faith groups, women's rights groups, environmental and good-governance groups—all telling us that we need to move forward to protect our democracy, that the Senate needs to act on this issue.

One of my guests, Virginia Kase Solomon from the League of Women Voters—now, the League of Women Voters—you can say a lot of things about them, but you can't accuse them of being partisan because they are not. It is one of our premier nonpartisan institutions in America with a proud history. They are telling us to take this bill up and act for the sake of protecting our democracy.

We then have a chance to act, to take up amendments and vote on amendments and vote on concerns, whether they are offered by a Republican Senator or a Democratic Senator. That is what the motion to proceed allows us to do, to take up these issues so we can vote on them. But if you vote to filibuster the motion to proceed, we can't even bring the issue up on the Senate floor for action.

I urge my colleagues not to filibuster the right of the U.S. Senate to start the debate on protecting voter integrity, where each Member will have an opportunity to debate the issue, and collectively we can come together, as many of my colleagues have offered suggestions about how we can improve S. 1, how we can make it a broader consensus, but we can't do that unless we have the right to proceed to a debate.

I urge my colleagues to support the cloture motion on the motion to proceed so the Senate can take up this most critically important issue to the preservation of our democracy and the integrity of the right to vote.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to complete my remarks prior to the rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, if the Constitution is the foundation our Republic, then the concept of ''one person, one vote'' is the cornerstone. It is also a promise that every single eligible voter in America takes with them into that voting booth on that election day. It gives them confidence that their vote matters. It helps them to keep the faith in our electoral system and in their local government.

We can talk about the vote on a grand scale here in Washington, but this is where it really matters: back home at your local polling place, in your home county, and in the precincts with the people who do the work of

standing up elections, running elections, and certifying their own elections. It is of the people, by the people, for the people that this process is carried out in each and every one of our counties. And you know what, that is how it is supposed to be.

Article I, section 4 of our Constitution clearly states—here it is:

Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof.

Well, how about that? The Constitution delegates that authority to the State legislatures, and that is why our States' secretaries of state work with our counties to make certain the process is put in place.

You know, I had the opportunity to serve on my county's local election commission prior to my being in elective office. One person, one vote—that is the No. 1 rule that guided the decisions they made. When we recruit poll workers, it is the No. 1 concern that drives people to go sign up. When we train the volunteers who are staffing polling places, it is the No. 1 rule to teach. Every person gets one vote. All legally cast votes are counted. That is the way it is supposed to work—one person, one vote.

Here in the Senate, I am concerned that my Democratic colleagues have forgotten about this rule. Why else would they once again pledge to move a piece of legislation that would throw ''one person, one vote'' out the window? Many of my Republican colleagues have taken to calling H.R. 1 or S. 1 the Politician Protection Act or the For the Politician Act, and I will have to agree that is a fairly apt description.

There are a lot of problems with this bill, but I want to focus on a few key provisions that will gut ''one person, one vote'' and destroy confidence in our elections.

If this bill passes, say goodbye to meaningful voter ID laws. My Democratic colleagues kept the idea of these requirements intact, but to please their radical base, they added a loophole that would force every single jurisdiction to accept affidavits in lieu of identification—that is right, an affidavit. They may as well have banned voter IDs because that loophole makes requirements that voters prove they are who they say they are absolutely meaningless. They can just sign a statement saying ''I am who I say I am'' without having to show proof.

The bill also requires States to allow paid campaign operatives to engage in ballot harvesting schemes. That is right. This allows your paid campaign operatives to engage in ballot harvesting schemes. Now, these ballot harvesting schemes have been proven time and again to increase the risk of fraud, so much so that many States on their own moved forward and banned ballot harvesting schemes. Why did they ban this? Because it leads to fraud in elections.

Inexplicably, my colleagues also want to throw ballot drop boxes into the mix. They pitched them as a convenience, but that convenience will be nearly impossible to monitor and to protect 24 hours a day, which means that it will be nearly impossible to monitor and protect the ballots that are inside those boxes, and these boxes then become a fairly convenient way to stuff the ballot box.

But perhaps the most dangerous, counterproductive, and outright infuriating provision my Democratic colleagues have included in this mess of a bill is a restriction against voter roll maintenance. Anyone with a bit of common sense knows how inaccurate or duplicate entries in a dataset can add up. That leaves these datasets in a state of disrepair, and that is how fraud and mistakes occur.

It is just one more provision in a bill raising red flags for local officials in every single State in this country. And this red flag, in particular, is prompting people to ask me if my Democratic colleagues involved in drafting this bill have ever actually volunteered at a local polling place, which really tells you a lot about how shortsighted this legislation is.

This bill really doesn't have anything to do with voting rights. This is a politically motivated Federal takeover of elections that would give us the exact opposite of what is laid out in the Constitution.

The Founders—the Founders—granted the States power over their own elections for a reason. The Federal Government is beyond incompetent to get this job done. If you like the service you get from the IRS or the EPA or OSHA, that is what you could expect the next time your community has an election.

If we allow this bill to pass, the promise of one person, one vote will crumble. The promise of counting eligible ballots and not counting ineligible ballots would go by the wayside. And what do you get in exchange? The promise of chaos, confusion, and a lack of confidence in the integrity of the vote.

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK FLINT

Madam President, the time has come for Team Blackburn to say goodbye to our fearless leader and current chief of staff, Chuck Flint.

Chuck first joined my team in the House as a member of our legislative staff. He was eager to prove himself capable and well versed on our legislative issues, and I will tell you, he succeeded. In the 7 years since he first walked through my office door, he has grown into one of the finest office chiefs of staff I have seen on the Hill and one of the finest political strategists here on Capitol Hill, one of my most trusted advisers, and, I will add, the most enthusiastic softball player on Team Whiskey Business—the most enthusiastic I think we have ever fielded.

I wish Chuck, Jessica, and little Everett all the hope and happiness in the world as they embark on their next beautiful adventure together.

We will miss him tremendously, but no matter how far they travel, they will always have a home with Team Blackburn and in service to the Volunteer State.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 149, Christopher Charles Fonzone, of Pennsylvania, to be General Counsel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Tina Smith, Martin Heinrich, Jacky Rosen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard J. Durbin, Tammy Baldwin, Debbie Stabenow, Sherrod Brown, Edward J. Markey, Brian Schatz, Ron Wyden, Elizabeth Warren, Mark R. Warner, Raphael Warnock, Benjamin L. Cardin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Christopher Charles Fonzone, of Pennsylvania, to be General Counsel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted ''nay'', and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted ''nay.''

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 242 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Cantwell	Cornyn
Bennet	Cardin	Cortez Masto
Blumenthal	Carper	Duckworth
Blunt	Collins	Durbin
Burr	Coons	Feinstein

Gillibrand	Menendez	Shaheen
Hassan	Merkley	Sinema
Heinrich	Murkowski	Smith
Hickenlooper	Murphy	Stabenow
Hirono	Murray	Tester
Kaine	Ossoff	Van Hollen
Kelly	Padilla	Warner
King	Peters	Warnock
Klobuchar	Reed	Warren
Leahy	Rosen	Whitehouse
Luján	Sanders	Wyden
Manchin	Schatz	
Markey	Schumer	

NAYS—35

Barrasso	Hagerty	Romney
Blackburn	Hawley	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tillis
Ernst	Marshall	Toomey
Fischer	McConnell	Tuberville
Graham	Moran	Wicker
Grassley	Portman	

NOT VOTING—13

Booker	Daines	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Brown	Inhofe	Young
Casey	Paul	
Cramer	Risch	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 35.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from New York.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1520

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate Armed Services Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1520 and the Senate proceed to its consideration; that there be 2 hours for debate, equally divided in the usual form; and that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the bill with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I object for the reason I previously stated. I want to thank the Senator for the courtesy of presenting the unanimous consent immediately. I appreciate that very much.

I am the first chairman to endorse the type of changes the Senator from New York has proposed as they apply to sex-related offenses under the UCMJ. It is my intent to include the administration's proposals in the base markup of the Defense bill next month, subject to amendments. And I anticipate numerous amendments being offered by Members on both sides of the aisle. Further, as I have already committed, the committee will consider these proposals to include a vote on them, in committee, if that is what any Senator desires. That is, in fact, the tradition of the committee. If a member wants a vote on an amendment, we will vote.

I would note that, according to committee records, there has not been a vote on this proposal in the committee since 2013, 8 years ago, and has not even been introduced as an amendment in committee since that time.

I look forward to having this debate when the committee meets to mark up the fiscal year 2022 Defense bill.

With that, I would reiterate my objection and again thank the Senator for her willingness to introduce the unanimous consent initially.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, it is very kind the chairman notes that the last time we got a vote in committee was 2013. We have been asking for a vote on this for the last 8 years, asking for the last 5 years to get a floor vote and been denied. This bill has been routinely and roundly filibustered and opposed by the chairman and the ranking member for the entire 8 years that I have been working on this bill. And this bicameral bill, that has 66 Senate cosponsors, should not be relegated by a committee that will communicate with the DOD behind the scenes. That is what they do. That is what they have been doing.

This is not a bill related to a technical aspect of warfighting that would benefit from the expertise found within the DOD. It is a check on the commander's power that has allowed a culture to flourish, where two and three victims do not feel comfortable coming forward to report their assault and 64 percent—a number that is stubbornly unchanged—experience retaliation when they do come forward. Moreover, a majority of the Members already cosponsor this bill so it is unclear what expertise the committee will add. It will only create an opportunity for the DOD to water down this much needed reform.

As a military law expert, Brenner Fissell wrote today in The Hill, ''An institution with the power to kill people and topple governments should not resist our elected Senators' clear will, cheering as a procedural loophole allows a small minority to prevent popular forms from being implemented.''

Mr. President, this is the 12th time that I have risen to ask for unanimous consent for a very simple reason: The Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act deserves a vote. The people in the military deserve a military justice system worthy of their sacrifice.

We don't have time to delay. Every day that we delay a vote on this, more servicemembers are being sexually assaulted and raped.

I started this request for unanimous consent 28 days ago. Since then, an estimated 1,568 servicemembers have been raped or sexually assaulted. More will have been victims of other serious crimes, and most of them will feel that there is no point in even reporting the crime because they have no faith in the current military justice system. That system asks commanders, not lawyers, to decide whether cases go forward. The lack of faith is understandable. Less than 1 in 10 sexual assault cases that are considered for command action are actually sent to trial, and just a small fraction of those end in conviction.

In the 8 years that we have been fighting for this reform, further fault lines in the military justice system have been made evident, including deeply troubling racial disparities. It is a disappointment that the chairman is not here to hear this information himself.

In 2017, a report found Black servicemembers were as much as 2.61 times more likely to have disciplinary action taken against them as their White counterparts. In 2019, the GAO found Black and Hispanic servicemembers were more likely than White servicemembers to be subjected to criminal investigation and to face general and special courts-martial. Those statics show a clear and pressing need to address what appears to be inherent bias in the current command-controlled system.

To provide our servicemembers with real justice, we must move all serious crimes out of the chain of command. This bill will do that by making a simple but critical change to the way the military justice system handles serious crime. It streamlines how cases move forward. Instead of commanders, who have zero formal legal training, making the decision to prefer or refer cases to trial, this bill gives those legal decisions to highly trained, impartial, professional military justice lawyers. It allows the commander to continue to work hand in hand with judge advocates to implement good order and discipline in their unit.

The bill really comes down to one thing: Is there enough evidence to move this case forward? We should not put that responsibility on commanders, who often know both the accused and the accuser and do not have legalized training to be able to make these decisions properly. When it comes to serious crimes that can lead to long, more-than-a-year sentences, that decision should be made by a legal expert.

That is the change the bill would make. It is tailored, it is simple, and it is an elegant solution to meet a very real problem. Commanders still have lots of power. They have the ability to enact nonjudicial punishment, which allows them to set the tone for their troops and maintain good order and discipline. They will still have the ability to put people on restriction and in confinement. They still have the ability to issue protective orders. These are the basic tools that commanders rely on to implement good order and discipline, not general courts-martial.

If a serious crime is not preferred and then referred by the JAG convening authority, it goes right back to the commander, who can choose to do several things. He can do nothing. He can carry out nonjudicial punishment or administrative separation. He can pursue summary or special court-martial.

However, this change, despite its simplicity and despite being a very small change, will create a seismic shift in how the military justice system is perceived by both servicemembers who have been subjected to sexual assault and by Black and Brown servicemembers who have been subjected to bias.

We need a professionalized military justice system so that everyone, from survivors to defendants, can have more trust in the current process—a process that is based on evidence and legal facts and that cases will be decided impartially. That is the system our servicemembers deserve and is the system that we create by the Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act.

We have tried every small ball effort you can imagine. The Presiding Officer has been on that committee for years. You watched us pass every type of reform that the DOD is OK with. This is the one they have fought tooth and nail to prevent implementation of, and even today, our chairman wants to narrow it down and reduce it to a very small size—one crime, one crime only.

Well, let's just look at the facts. The Vanessa Guillen case was a murder case. Under the chairman's own analysis, he would not have allowed that case to go forward through the review of a special, trained military prosecutor. In fact, her case may never have seen the light of day. That is a problem. So we need to treat all serious crimes the same.

We have compromised on this bill. We carved out all the serious crimes that are military in nature—going AWOL, not following a direct command, anything that the commander would have a special purview over—but we draw a bright line at the rest of those serious crimes, and that is a good solution. It is what our allies have already done—UK, Israel, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Australia—and they saw no diminution in command control.

We need to build a military justice system that is worthy of the sacrifices that the men and women in our armed services make every day.

I yield the floor to the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Thank you, Senator GILLIBRAND.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I think we just heard the Senator from New York speak very strongly about the need for this legislation. She said 12 times she has come to the Senate floor to ask for UC on this bill. So we all ought to know—not only on this bill but a lot of things the Senator from New York is involved in—she is not going to give up. Eight years on this bill proves that, her persistence.

We need to get this done. I would think that a bill that has 66 cosponsors and the demonstrated need for it is such that the people opposing this would be embarrassed, particularly with the 66 cosponsors.

I thank Senator GILLIBRAND for her persistence. I am glad to be with her on this subject. I haven't worked as hard as she has, but I believe everything she has said, and this bill should pass.

In the last 15 years, there has been virtually no progress in reducing the level of sexual assault in the military. Far too many service men and women have experienced sexual assault, and we don't even know the full extent of the problem because people are afraid to report these because of the retribution that happens as a result of the report. Of those who do report, 64 percent experience retaliation.

But this goes beyond sexual assault. This legislation professionalizes the military justice system and would improve trust and transparency in the ability of the military to handle all serious crimes. The policy of moving the decision to prosecute out of the chain of command has been recommended by military justice experts.

This bill has been considered by the Armed Services Committee for 8 years in a row, and that is why the time has come now to make sure that this bill does not get buried once again in that committee or, as she suggested, very narrowly—the committee has had more than enough time to review the legislation and propose alternatives. We have even heard from the Department of Defense that they can solve this problem, and yet it keeps getting worse.

This bill with so many cosponsors deserves the support and shouldn't have to wait any longer to get passed. It is time for the legislation to finally move forward, and I urge my colleagues to join in this effort to get this done the easiest way possible, and that would be by UC.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I have been listening today and a few other days, I think, about Senator GILLIBRAND's efforts to bring up what I think is a major reform of the military justice system to the point where you won't recognize it as it is today. I hope you understand what we are being asked to do here. Senator REED, who is the chairman of the committee, has been objecting.

Before I got here, I was a military lawyer and Active Duty in the Reserves for about 33 years. I was a prosecutor, defense attorney, and judge.

What I would like to challenge this body to do is find me cases where the judge advocate has recommended prosecution in a sexual assault case in the last 8 years and the commander refused to go forward. I was in the military JAG Corps for 33 years. I can only remember one time where that was even an issue.

Previous efforts to reform the system work like the following: If the JAG recommends prosecution in a sexual assault case as defined in the last piece of legislation and they refuse to go forward, it is taken to the commander's commander. So what problem are we trying to solve here?

What we are doing in this bill is relieving the chain of command when it comes to military justice. If the commander no longer is concerned about sexual assaults in the barracks, we made a huge mistake. The heart and soul of the military justice system is to provide a fair trial to the accused, take care of victims, but give the commander the tools they need for good order and discipline.

So the idea of taking the commander out of the chain of command when it comes to terrible things like sexual assault I think is a bad idea because it is the commander's job to make sure that unit works well. Having a bunch of professional prosecutors make the decision without the commander being involved is basically relieving the commander of what is best for that unit overall.

Sexual assault is a problem in the military. It is a problem in the civilian world. It is a problem all over the place. But the military justice system is designed to bring about good order and discipline.

I can only say that the day that the commander is taken out of the responsibility for what happens in that unit is a bad day for good order and discipline and I think a bad day for that unit.

Again, the legal advice given to commanders in cases like we are talking about is almost universally followed. There have probably been more occasions where a commander will take an iffy case to court just to make the point—cases that would never probably get off first base in the civilian world.

But the people pushing this bill always talk about results and courts-martial. I think the worst thing the U.S. Senate could do is create an impression that a not-guilty verdict is unacceptable in the military. Sometimes a not-guilty verdict is the right answer to the situation presented to the court. I am beginning to doubt whether or not you can get a fair trial in the military if you are accused of one of these crimes.

When politicians attack results in the system, we are sending a pretty clear signal: If you are a court-martial panel member, we are going to be grading your homework here in the Senate, because there seems to be a bias that the only outcome must be a guilty verdict.

The truth of the matter is that a lot of women go to their graves having

been assaulted and never having reported the events to anybody. We need to make it easier for victims to come forward. On occasion, people are accused of things they didn't do, and I have been involved in many of these cases. On occasion, you will find that the accusation doesn't hold water—not sufficient to be anywhere near being beyond a reasonable doubt—and sometimes people say things that are just flat not true.

So what I worry about is that, in our effort to reform the system to solve a problem that really doesn't exist—commanders ignoring the JAGs and not prosecuting people because they like them or they have favoritism is not a problem. If you want to talk about reforming the military justice system, fine, but let's don't stand here in the U.S. Senate and say that commanders in the military routinely turn down legal advice to prosecute. They don't. That is just not true. In the military, in a general court-martial, you need three-fourths to convict.

If we are going to go down this track of talking about what an acceptable outcome should be, then I am going to start introducing legislation to change the requirement of the verdict to be unanimous. I was a prosecutor for 4½ years and a defense attorney for 2. I understand sort of the military courtroom environment.

The panel members—the members of the jury—are commissioned officers or you can request noncommissioned officers, and the accused has that right up to a certain percentage of the panel. These panels are constructed not like a civilian court; they are constructed to make sure that the jury usually comes from the officer corps, and people with the responsibility for that base are picked to serve on these juries to make sure that the base is being well run, that people receive justice who have been violated, and that those accused of a crime have a fair trial. The worst thing that can happen is when a commander seems to have favorites and the people he likes get away with almost anything and the people the commander doesn't like—well, they look for reasons to come down hard on them.

When I was a young JAG, I would go talk to commanders and first sergeants. The worst thing you can do to a unit is play favorites. Call them as you see them. You need to show up in the middle of the night in the barracks—the commander and first sergeant—when they least think you are going to come, and just let people know you are watching them. Most enlisted people are 18 to 22 years old, and it is their first time away from home.

We have made some strides that I think are good. We provide victims of sexual assault in the military with their own individual counsel. Most people don't get that in the civilian world. We are trying to train prosecutors on how to handle these cases, and I like that. Yet, if we are going to start creating a presumption here—contrary to being innocent—that there is only one right answer, then we need to start training a bunch of defense attorneys and have a specialty there. The worst thing that could happen in a military unit is for somebody to be assaulted and to be treated poorly, and nothing happens. Second to that is for somebody to be accused of something that is seen as being not legitimate. That is why you have trials. That is why you have defense attorneys. That is why you have judges. That is why you have prosecutors.

The thing that is unique about the military is that it is not a jury of your peers. The jury is made up of the officer corps on that base who has the responsibility, usually, to run the base. You can request, as an enlisted member, that part of the panel be enlisted, but they are going to be the more senior ranks on the base. They are not going to be E–3s and E–4s. They are going to be E–8s and E–9s. They are going to be the senior enlisted corps, who is responsible for good order and discipline and morale on the base. That is what is unique about the military justice system.

I found, as a defense attorney, that people look long and hard at the government's case. I will talk later on about some cases I had wherein people were accused of using drugs by urinalysis. The system was fatally flawed, and over time the military justice system got that right.

I just want Senator REED to know that, on slowing this train down and getting the Members of this body to understand what we are talking about, I will support him more. I should be down here talking more. Like everybody else, we are busy. I promise to come down more to give my side of what we should be thinking about in terms of reform and why what is before us is not reform; it is a radical change to the military justice system based on, I think, a premise that doesn't exist.

The one thing I want you to know is there are a handful of cases a year in the Army, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, and the Navy on which the commander refuses to go forward after the JAGs have recommended a court-martial in sexual assault cases. That is what we are all supposed to be worried about—that the system is biased against victims. What can we do to make it easier to report these situations? What can we do to convince people that the command is not going to turn on you if you are a victim? These are all legitimate things, but to fire the entire chain of command based on a premise that, I think, doesn't hold water would be bad and would, over time, undercut the military's ability to maintain good order and discipline and to be an effective fighting force.

Senator REED is the chairman of the committee, and I will try to do more to help him. I respect Senator GILLIBRAND a lot, and she is very passionate about this. All I can say is that passion and justice have to be measured, and we have to be making decisions based on facts, not just on an outcome that we would like. When we start talking about a case wherein somebody was acquitted and as if that was the wrong result, that scares the hell out of me.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF TRACY STONE-MANNING

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I am here on the Senate floor this afternoon to call on President Biden to withdraw his nomination to lead the Bureau of Land Management, Tracy Stone-Manning. He should withdraw her for the reasons I am going to talk about here on the Senate floor, but let me stipulate that, while I have often spoken about what I consider far-left extremist environmentalists who are taking over many elements of the Biden administration, often in the context of why I voted against their confirmation, I have not yet called on—haven't in my entire Senate career—a nomination to be withdrawn before they even have gone through their Senate confirmation hearing before a Senate committee. But I am doing it this afternoon.

The reason I have never done this before is because we have not yet confronted someone with Tracy Stone-Manning's past, which involves being a member, part of an extreme group that performed violent acts as part of their platform for getting attention in America—violence, a group engaging in overt ecoterrorism.

By the way, this is becoming a bipartisan issue—a serious bipartisan issue—as I am going to talk about in a little bit more detail.

The Director of BLM from the Obama-Biden administration just yesterday made a statement saying that, if these allegations are true, which they are, then, he firmly believes that her nomination should be withdrawn by the President. That is Mr. Bob Abbey. So this is a serious issue, and it is a bipartisan issue.

Before I talk about Tracy Stone-Manning's involvement with ecoterrorism, let me start by saying that BLM is an incredibly important and very powerful Federal Agency, particularly as it relates to my State, the great State of Alaska. The Alaska BLM manages more surface and subsurface acres in my State than in any other State in the country, by far. In fact, I haven't done the math, but I believe that they manage more acreage in Alaska than they do in the rest of the lower 48 combined. That is how important BLM is in my State.

Let me give you some of the numbers. This includes over 70 million surface acres of land and 220 million subsurface acres. That is the land equivalent to about one-fifth of the entire lower 48 States. Most States can't even comprehend that size. One-fifth of the lower 48 of the United States of America is the amount of land BLM manages just in the great State of Alaska. So it is a huge amount of land and, of course, by definition, it is a huge amount of power that this Federal Agency has over my State and the people I am honored to represent.

And it is imperative—imperative—for the Director of this Agency, the Bureau of Land Management, with so much power and so much control over my State and its future in economic opportunity for working Alaskan families—that the manager of BLM for the country be trustworthy—to be honest, to be fairminded, to be beyond reproach, and, certainly, not to have been involved in an organization that perpetuated violence against its fellow Americans.

And from what we know about Tracy Stone-Manning, she is none of these things—trustworthy, honest, and fairminded.

That this administration is full of people with far-left agendas certainly isn't surprising. We all know that the national Democratic Party is much further to the left than they were even 4 years ago with the Obama-Biden administration. But what is shocking beyond surprising is that the President of the United States would put forward someone for this incredibly important position in BLM who is not only far left but a member of a group that was an ecoterrorist organization, a group that was undertaking violence against their fellow Americans so they could make a point on environmental issues in America.

This is not an exaggeration. Tracy Stone-Manning was a member of Earth First!, a radical, far-left group that has engaged repeatedly in what is defined as ecoterrorism.

But she wasn't just a member of Earth First!; she herself was complicit in putting metal spikes—big, thick ones—in trees that were meant to either threaten to hurt or gravely injure those Americans who were harvesting trees, who were cutting down trees legally, who were putting trees in saw mills legally.

This was a common technique—tree spiking—deployed by such ecoterrorists in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Earth First! called such tactics ''monkey wrenching.'' That is kind of cute. It is dangerous. It could kill people—''monkey wrenching.''

Logging crews and the Americans who were legally harvesting timber in our country might have called such tactics terrifying, and certainly called such tactics very, very dangerous.

So let me briefly talk about the group that Tracy Stone-Manning was a member of. Earth First! began in 1980 by disaffected environmentalists who thought the movement wasn't radical enough, thought the movement wasn't getting enough attention. So they founded a new group that wanted to get more attention, sometimes by perpetuating violence. Among its proposed founding principles, ''all human decisions should consider Earth first, mankind second''—I am quoting now—''mankind second.'' OK. Not sure many U.S. Senators would agree with that. And ''the only true test of morality is whether an action, individual, social or political, benefits the earth.'' These are founding principles of this organization.

Given these principles, it is no mystery that the group's slogan is this: ''No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth.'' In their view, ''no compromise'' meant destroying property, putting steel spikes in trees that could kill someone trying to harvest a tree, and Earth First! celebrated and encouraged such actions.

The group even put out a manual—yes, a manual—detailing tree spiking and instructions on how to do other sabotage activities: cut down powerlines, flatten tires, burn machinery of those who were trying to harvest trees legally.

We harvest trees legally in Alaska. We have loggers who do that, who are from hard-working families.

David Foreman, the founder of Earth First!, talked about all of these activities, and he said: ''This is where the ecoteur can have fun.'' That is a quote from the founder of Earth First! ''Fun.'' That is what he called this—''fun.''

Tell that to those violently hurt by some of Earth First!'s tactics.

This is how an article in the Washington Post, from this time, described such an incident of tree spiking that severely, violently hurt one of our fellow Americans. And now I am going to quote from this article:

> George Alexander, a third-generation mill worker, was just starting his shift at the Louisiana-Pacific lumber mill in Cloverdale, Calif., when the log that would alter his life rolled down his conveyor belt toward a high-speed saw he was working on.

By the way, I have seen these saws in Alaska, in mills in Alaska. They are huge. This isn't just some kind of tiny saw. They are gigantic, and they spin at incredibly fast speeds with huge teeth. They are dangerous, even when you are operating without tree spikes in the trees.

Let me continue. Here is the continuation of this article from the Washington Post: It was May 1987, and George Alexander was 23 years old. His job was to split logs. He was nearly 3 feet away when the log he was working on hit his saw, and the saw, this giant saw, exploded. One-half of the blade stuck in the log. The other half hit Alexander in the head—again, these are giant saws—tearing through his safety helmet and tearing through his face shield. His face was slashed from eye to chin, his teeth were smashed, and his jaw was cut in half.

That is what Earth First! did to this young American doing his job with a tree spike in it.

I am continuing with the Washington Post article: George Alexander had never even heard of a sabotage tactic called tree spiking until he himself had become a victim of ''eco-terrorism.''

That is the Washington Post's word, not my word, ''eco-terrorism.''

> Someone who objected to tree cutting had imbedded a huge steel spike in the log that violently jammed the saw.

And changed George Alexander's life. Tree spiking.

That is the Washington Post.

These were the kinds of tactics that Tracy Stone-Manning, the Biden administration's choice to lead the BLM for America, once conspired in. Does that disturb you, America?

Every U.S. Senator on the floor here in this body should be very, very disturbed.

Mr. President—and now I am talking to the President of the United States—think about this, sir. I say respectfully: Come on, man. This is the most qualified American citizen you can find to be the BLM Director?

She was part of a group—not just a radical, extreme environmental group but a radical, extreme, violent, environmental group.

President Biden, this should be a redline that we all agree to: no nominees who conducted violence against their fellow Americans.

But what did she do specifically? The Biden administration's Director of BLM—nominated Director of BLM—here is what she did. In 1989, she did a friend, a fellow Earth First! colleague—''comrade'' maybe is a better word—she did a friend, a comrade, a fellow comrade a favor. She rewrote word-for-word a profane, anonymous letter from this member of Earth First! about the 500 pounds of tree spikes that Earth First! had hammered into trees in Idaho—by Earth First! Pretty dangerous. Pretty violent. She rewrote the letter on a rented typewriter because, she later told a reporter, ''her fingerprints were all over'' it. So she knew she was obviously involved in criminal activity. So she didn't just handwrite it. She didn't want her fingerprints on it. She typed it. She then sent the letter to the FBI.

She kept quiet on what she did for years—that was in 1989—until she came forward in 1993 and received immunity for her part in this tree spiking in Idaho, 500 pounds of spikes. This is a serious operation. Deadly. Could be deadly. She received immunity for her part in this tree spiking when prosecutors went after the other members of Earth First! and she testified about it.

Here is something that should be very simple for all of us. No matter how young, no matter how naive, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management for the United States of

America should not—and I repeat, should not—have ever been involved in ecoterrorism. That is simply unacceptable, and the President of the United States should get that, and certainly every U.S. Senator should get that.

Working with people who were so radical on environmental issues that they thought it was OK to perpetuate violence against their fellow American citizens—come on, man.

President Biden, you cannot be serious.

It is not only me who thinks this is an outrage. I want to compliment my Senate colleague Senator BARRASSO, who has been doing a great job. Unfortunately, our press has been asleep at the switch. Senator BARRASSO has been doing a great job of highlighting these very issues. But, as I said earlier, this is now becoming a bipartisan issue. It is not just me and Senator BARRASSO who have been raising this issue. Just yesterday, Bob Abbey, who led the BLM from 2009 through 2012 under President Obama and Vice President Biden, said the following:

If the reports regarding Ms. Stone-Manning's involvement with spiking trees are true, then I firmly believe she should immediately withdraw her name from further consideration for the BLM director job.

Let me read that again. The BLM Director of the Biden-Obama administration just yesterday said the following:

If the reports regarding Ms. Stone-Manning's involvement with spiking trees are true, then I firmly believe she should immediately withdraw her name from further consideration for the BLM director job.

Well, guess what. The reports about her involvement with tree spiking by the ecoterrorist organization Earth First! meant to harm her fellow Americans are true. They are true.

Madam President, there are other issues that also call into question Ms. Stone-Manning's character. I am not going to get into these. I will let others focus on them—low interest loans, other things. That is in some ways, in my view, a distraction. Her involvement with an organization that was focused on ecoterrorism certainly disqualifies her, and the President of the United States should know this.

I didn't agree with Bob Abbey on much when he was the head of BLM under the Obama-Biden administration, but I certainly agree with him about Tracy Stone-Manning, and I believe the President of the United States should withdraw her name from further consideration. If the President doesn't do that because he gets pressure from the extreme left, then I certainly hope—I certainly hope—my colleagues here in the U.S. Senate, Democrats and Republicans, will resoundingly vote to reject this nomination when it comes to the Senate floor.

Yes, we have differences on issues of resource development, energy for America, certainly on issues of jobs and resource development in my great State, the great State of Alaska. We have differences. There is no doubt about it. But here is the thing: We all know—I think every one of us, all 100 Senators, know and would say publicly that these differences should be resolved peacefully in debates here on the Senate floor, at the ballot box, arguing these issues—forcefully, yes, but not violently, not with violence.

So if this nominee comes to this floor, it shouldn't be even a close vote; it should be 100 to 0 rejecting her.

To my Democratic colleagues, I hope you join me, like Mr. Bob Abbey, in saying: Mr. President, guess what—you screwed up here. Withdraw her.

But if he won't do that, I hope every U.S. Senator votes against this. We cannot condone, endorse, or vote for somebody who has been part of an ecoterrorist, radical, extreme, violent organization.

My colleagues, America will be watching. If you vote for her, you have to go home and explain that vote to your fellow Americans. As I mentioned, it is one thing for this administration to put forward far-left, extreme environmental nominees. It is quite another to put forward a far-left, extreme, violent environmental nominee, and that is what she is.

To the President of the United States: Respectfully, sir, you need to withdraw this nomination.

To my colleagues on the Senate floor here: Respectfully to all of you, if the President doesn't take this commonsense action, we need to decisively reject this nomination when it comes to the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise in support of S. Res. 268 and of our Nation's dairy farmers, processors, and consumers as we celebrate National Dairy Month.

This National Dairy Month is especially important. This time last year, the country was still shut down. The economy was in the middle of a major shock, and the dairy sector, like so many others, had to persevere. Dairy farmers bore the brunt of very low prices resulting from the COVID–19 pandemic. Dairy processors had to pivot their entire supply chain to meet new and unique demand for their products. While managing these challenges, dairy processors continue to address food insecurity caused by the pandemic by donating billions of dollars of nutritious milk, cheese, yogurt, and butter to needy Americans.

Despite unthinkable pressures, the industry continues to hold on. By no means are we out of the woods yet. Dairy farmers across the country continue to face pricing challenges. This National Dairy Month and every month, I encourage my fellow Members of the Senate and all Americans to keep these hard-working farm families in your mind and their products in your grocery basket.

Milk provides several essential nutrients and is the No. 1 source of calcium, potassium, and vitamin D for Americans. Yogurt and cheese are top sources of protein, magnesium, phosphorous, vitamins A and D, and calcium. And my personal favorite dairy product—ice cream—is a delicious, nutrient-dense treat that hits the spot during hot summer days in Arkansas.

National Dairy Month is a wonderful annual tradition highlighting an important sector and its contribution to the American economy and dinner plate. I want to thank Senators ROGER MARSHALL, KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, and others for bringing this resolution to the Senate floor and for their steadfast service on behalf of U.S. agriculture.

THE REAL CHALLENGES OF RANCHING

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to submit for the record a column written by Mr. Jim Magagna, executive vice president of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, entitled ''Magagna: The Real Challenges of Ranching.'' The article was published on June 2 of this year.

I recently spoke at the 2021 Wyoming Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show, ''Positioning Wyoming's Beef Industry for Success,'' hosted by the 149-year-old Wyoming Stock Growers Association in Sheridan. This convention focused on both the challenges and the opportunities that producers have before them. Jim says it best: Some of these are just simply challenging opportunities.

I urge my colleagues to stand with ranchers like Jim Magagna and the ranchers that he represents. Stand with those who understand the land best and not with extremists who do not know how to run a farm, a ranch, or a small business.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Ranching in Wyoming begins with a dedicated, often multi-generational, ranching family or a highly qualified dedicated ranch manager. Beyond this foundation, success on an annual basis is driven primarily by three factors—the weather, the markets and the government. When two of these are positive, most ranchers would describe their year as a ''success''. In that rare year when all three factors are particularly favorable, the seasoned rancher saves dollars in preparation for the inevitable bad year.

2020, given the impacts of COVID, was a year of ''all of the above'' and more. The daily chores and challenges of operating the ranch continued. With livestock needing to be fed, and calved or lambed there was no unemployment. While others struggled to adjust to having their children home doing remote learning, many ranchers just welcomed the extra help from the kids. A major challenge was driving long distances into town for supplies, only to find that many of the needed items were not available.

Livestock markets crashed in the spring of 2020, but returned to a more normal range by the time that most Wyoming ranchers were facing fall marketing. Government policies were stable and somewhat friendly toward agriculture. While some areas of Wyoming experienced drought, most ranchers were able to maintain their herds with some added supplemental feeding. Federal payments through the CARES Act provided significant relief for some. Looking back, two of the three factors could be deemed to have been positive at some time during the year.

While the impacts of COVID have lessened, 2021 is evolving as a much more challenging year for many Wyoming ranchers than 2020 when assessed by the three factors. Drought clearly rises to the top of concerns faced by producers across most of the state. Northwestern Wyoming experienced good winter snowfall and the very southeastern portion has had significant spring moisture. However, the majority of Wyoming is suffering from both a shortage of irrigation water and a lack of soil moisture. As a result, we are seeing a worrisome reduction in the number of summer pasture cattle coming into the state as well as the sale of replacement heifers that had been retained in the fall of 2020. This will have impacts on production for at least the next several years.

The change in administrations in Washington, DC this year has added another high level of uncertainty to Wyoming ranching. While some degree of uncertainty accompanies any political change, the rhetoric and fast-paced issuance of Executive and Secretarial Orders by the current administration has been particularly frightening. The rhetoric that surrounds ''30 x 30'', ''Make America Beautiful'', ''Climate Change'' and other initiatives to date lacks any substantive detail to enable our assessment of how it might affect Wyoming's agriculture industry.

Cattle market events in recent years have given cattle producers both needed wake-up call and a new path forward. Our beef marketing chain clearly has a bottleneck at the processing level. This both increases risk when an event such as COVID impacts a major facility, and concentrates market control in too few hands. Consumer interest in buying local and knowing where their food comes from has provided new marketing opportunities for some producers. In the span of two years Wyoming has gone from having only one federally inspected processing facility to nine facilities either operating or under construction. New larger facilities being developed across the nation, including in Idaho and Nebraska, will provide greater competition and lessen dependence on the ''Big Four'' U.S. beef processors. Efforts by the industry and the Wyoming Business Council continue to attract larger processors to Wyoming.

A discussion of ranching' s challenges would not be complete without acknowledging the emergence of ''fake meat''—both plant-based and lab-cultured products. While these products have received tremendous publicity, endorsement by celebrities and are now offered in some retail establishments, they have not emerged as a threat to the demand for high-quality beef and lamb.

Yes, ranching today is faced with significant emerging challenges. Fortunately, these challenges are leading to exciting new opportunities. Exploring these opportunities will be the focus of the 2021 Wyoming Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show, ''Positioning Wyoming's Beef industry for Success'' hosted by the 149 year-old Wyoming Stock Growers Association in Sheridan June 2–4.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME ON JUNE 16, 2021

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2093. A bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2118. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for increased investment in clean energy, and for other purposes.

PRIVILEGED NOMINATION REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Mohsin Raza Syed, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, vice Adam J. Sullivan.

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, vice John E. Kramer.

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations: Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation.

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation, vice Linda Thomas-Greenfield, resigned.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 522. A bill to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100-word plain language summary of the proposed rule (Rept. No. 117–25).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments:

S. 583. A bill to promote innovative acquisition techniques and procurement strategies, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–26).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 693. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the halt in pension payments for Members of Congress sentenced for certain offenses, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–27).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2139. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent international cybercrime, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BENNET, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 2140. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish the advanced solar manufacturing production credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2141. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide an additional tool to prevent certain frauds against veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2142. A bill to require annual reports on religious intolerance in Saudi Arabian educational materials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2143. A bill to authorize the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to terminate certain contracts on the basis of detrimental conduct to the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 2144. A bill to clarify the eligibility for participation of peer support specialists in the furnishing of behavioral health integration services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REED:

S. 2145. A bill to ensure that irresponsible corporate executives, rather than shareholders, pay fines and penalties; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2146. A bill to establish within the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services a special task force on ensuring Medicare beneficiary access to innovative diabetes technologies and services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2147. A bill to enhance civil penalties under the Federal securities laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2148. A bill to impose sanctions and other measures in response to the failure of the Government of the People's Republic of China to allow an investigation into the origins of COVID–19 at suspect laboratories in Wuhan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 2149. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage under the Medicare program for FDA-approved qualifying colorectal cancer screening blood-based tests, to increase participation in colorectal cancer screening in underscreened communities of color, to offset the COVID–19 pandemic driven declines in colorectal cancer screening, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROMNEY (for himself and Mr. KELLY):

S. 2150. A bill to prevent catastrophic wildland fires by establishing a commission to study and recommend wildland fire prevention, mitigation, suppression, management, and rehabilitation policies for the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2151. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide that COPS grant funds may be used for local law enforcement recruits to attend schools or academies if the recruits agree to serve in precincts of law enforcement agencies in their communities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUJÁN:

S. 2152. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations requiring material in the online public inspection file of a covered entity to be made available in a format that is machine-readable; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina:

S. 2153. A bill to amend the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to ensure community accountability for areas repeatedly damaged by floods, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 2154. A bill to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to extend the Federal framework closing date for the hunting of ducks, mergansers, and coots, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WARNOCK (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. 2155. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, and the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to provide increased protections for election workers and voters in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 535

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 535, a bill to authorize the location of a memorial on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces that served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. 544

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 544, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as ''Buddy Check Week'' for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 923

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 923, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a consumer recycling education and outreach grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1061

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of S. 1061, a bill to encourage the normalization of relations with Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 1220

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1220, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize and honor the service of individuals who served in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1280

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1280, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 1360

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1360, a bill to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 and the Head Start Act to promote child care and early learning, and for other purposes.

S. 1574

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1574, a bill to codify a statutory definition for long-term care pharmacies.

S. 1792

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1792, a bill to establish certain requirements for the small refineries exemption of the renewable fuels provisions under the Clean Air Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1917

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1917, a bill to establish a K–12 education cybersecurity initiative, and for other purposes.

S. 1927

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1927, a bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

S. 1947

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1947, a bill to authorize the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, to statutorily establish the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, and for other purposes.

S. 2084

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2084, a bill to terminate the order requiring persons to wear masks while on conveyances and at transportation hubs.

S. 2091

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 2091, a bill to amend the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to increase appropriations to Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2123

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2123, a bill to establish the Federal Clearinghouse on Safety and Security Best Practices for Faith-Based Organizations and Houses of Worship, and for other purposes.

S. 2125

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) were added as cosponsors of S. 2125, a bill to divert Federal funding away from supporting the presence of police in schools and toward evidence-based and trauma informed services that address the needs of marginalized students and improve academic outcomes, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 107

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr.

SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 107, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate relating to the 10th anniversary of the March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

S. RES. 280

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 280, a resolution supporting a stable Colombia and opposing any threat to democracy in Colombia.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. REED:

S. 2145. A bill to ensure that irresponsible corporate executives, rather than shareholders, pay fines and penalties; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing the Corporate Management Accountability Act, which asks each publicly traded company to disclose its policies on whether senior executives or shareholders bear the costs of paying the company's fines and penalties.

In 2014, William Dudley, then the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, gave a speech titled ''Enhancing Financial Stability by Improving Culture in the Financial Services Industry.'' In this speech, President Dudley said, ''in recent years, there have been ongoing occurrences of serious professional misbehavior, ethical lapses and compliance failures at financial institutions. This has resulted in a long list of large fines and penalties and to a lesser degree than I would have desired employee dismissals and punishment . . . The pattern of bad behavior did not end with the financial crisis, but continued despite the considerable public sector intervention that was necessary to stabilize the financial system. As a consequence, the financial industry has largely lost the public trust.''

Since 2009, banks around the world have paid $394 billion in penalties, according to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). This is an increase of $22 billion from the last time I introduced this legislation. It has been evident that simply fining and penalizing financial institutions at the corporate level is not enough to deter bad actors. Senior executives, many of whom are all too eager to take credit for a company's good news, must also take more responsibility for the bad news, especially if it is true that the buck stops with them.

According to Professor Peter J. Henning, who also writes the White Collar Watch column for the New York Times, ''a problem in holding individuals accountable for misconduct in an organization is the disconnect between the actual decisions and those charged with overseeing the company, so that executives and corporate boards usually plead ignorance about an issue until it is too late.''

The Corporate Management Accountability Act I am reintroducing today is one attempt at helping to solve this problem. The bill simply asks publicly traded companies to disclose whether they expect senior executives or shareholders to pay the cost of corporate fines or penalties. This proposal has been supported by University of Minnesota Law School Professors Claire Hill and Richard Painter, who also served as President George W. Bush's chief ethics lawyer, as well as Americans for Financial Reform.

I urge all my colleagues to join this legislative effort to hold senior executives accountable for their actions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2146. A bill to establish within the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services a special task force on ensuring Medicare beneficiary access to innovative diabetes technologies and services; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing the Stronger Enforcement of Civil Penalties Act along with Senator GRASSLEY and Senator LEAHY. This bill will help securities regulators better protect investors and demand greater accountability from market players. Even in the midst of an unprecedented public health and economic emergency, we continue to see calculated wrongdoing by some on Wall Street, and without the consequence of meaningful penalties to serve as an effective deterrent, I worry this disturbing culture of misconduct will persist.

The amount of penalties the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) can fine an institution or individual is restricted by statute. During hearings I held in 2011 as Chairman of the Banking Committee's Securities, Insurance, and Investment Subcommittee, I learned how this limitation significantly interferes with the SEC's ability to execute its enforcement duties. At that time, a Federal judge had criticized the SEC for not obtaining a larger settlement against Citigroup, a major actor in the financial crisis that settled with the agency in an amount that was far below the cost the bank had inflicted on investors. The SEC indicated that a statutory prohibition against levying a larger penalty led to the low settlement amount. Indeed, then SEC Chairman Mary L. Schapiro in 2011 also explained that ''the Commission's statutory authority to obtain civil monetary penalties with appropriate deterrent effect is limited in many circumstances.''

The bipartisan bill we are reintroducing aims to update the SEC's outdated civil penalties statutes. This bill strives to make potential and current offenders think twice before engaging in misconduct by raising the maximum statutory civil monetary penalties, directly linking the size of the penalties to the amount of losses suffered by victims of a violation, and substantially increasing the financial stakes for serial offenders of our nation's securities laws.

Specifically, our bill would broaden the SEC's options to tailor penalties to the particular circumstances of a given violation. In addition to raising the per violation caps for severe, or ''third tier,'' violations to $1 million per offense for individuals and $10 million per offense for entities, the legislation would also give the SEC more options to collect greater penalties based on the ill-gotten gains of the violator or on the financial harm to investors.

Our bill also seeks to deter repeat offenders on Wall Street through two provisions. The first would authorize the SEC to triple the penalty cap applicable to recidivists who have been held either criminally or civilly liable for securities fraud within the previous five years. The second would allow the SEC to seek a civil penalty against those who violate existing federal court or SEC orders, an approach that would be more efficient, effective, and flexible than the current civil contempt remedy. These updates would greatly enhance the SEC's ability to levy robust penalties against repeat offenders.

According to the SEC's FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification, ''the SEC is responsible for reviewing the disclosures and financial statements of more than 7,400 reporting companies.'' The SEC further notes that a ''record 67 million U.S. families held direct and indirect stock holdings in 2019, up 13 percent from 2010,'' and the agency is ''charged with overseeing approximately $100 trillion in annual securities trading on U.S. equity markets and the activities of more than 28,000 registered entities.'' All of our constituents deserve a strong regulator that has the necessary tools to go after fraudsters and pursue the difficult cases arising from our increasingly complex financial markets. The Stronger Enforcement of Civil Penalties Act will enhance the SEC's ability to demand meaningful accountability from Wall Street, which in turn will increase transparency and confidence in our financial system. I urge our colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2147. A bill to enhance civil penalties under the Federal securities laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr President, I come to the floor today to join my colleague Senator COLLINS from Maine, who will be here shortly, who is also my cochair of the Diabetes Caucus, to reintroduce the Improving Medicare Beneficiary Access to Innovative Diabetes Technologies Act. This is legislation that would establish a task force to provide recommendations to help

guide Medicare's decisions on coverage and payment for new technologies to improve the lives of people with diabetes.

I have had the opportunity to see the challenges that families with members who have type 1 diabetes face. My granddaughter, my oldest granddaughter, has type 1 diabetes, and I know the challenges her family faces navigating a complex web of insurance coverage rules for technologies. Anytime a new technology comes out that would benefit her, to get the insurance companies to adopt those technologies is a huge challenge, and it requires hours of phone time with the insurance company, trying to persuade them that they should provide the coverage.

Well, we know that these insurance companies often base their coverage and reimbursement rules on Medicare. That is why it is so important for the Medicare Program to keep pace with the development of new diabetes technologies and devices.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with Senator COLLINS on a regular basis in the Diabetes Caucus. In 2017, we were successful in pressing Medicare to cover continuous glucose monitors, something that seems like an obvious choice given the difference that those CGMs can make for people who have diabetes and ensuring that their blood sugar stays stable. We have also worked together to ensure that Medicare provides flexibility so that patients can use smartphone apps with their continuous glucose monitors.

In the years to come, we need Medicare to make progress toward covering the artificial pancreas, a landmark development that will be the most significant change for people with diabetes since insulin was discovered, but to do this, we shouldn't have to resign ourselves to this piecemeal approach to Medicare coverage that requires continual pressure from Congress and advocates.

We need an independent body, like the one that is identified in our legislation, to help provide recommendations to Medicare so that its coverage of new technologies can adapt more quickly as innovation advances. That is why I am proud to be here on the floor and proud to join Senator COLLINS in reintroducing this bill. I hope my colleagues will take a look at it, decide that it merits passage, and work with us to get that done.

My colleague has arrived on the floor.

Senator COLLINS, I was just saying that I was very proud to be able to join you in reintroducing this legislation, and hopefully this session, we will be able to get it done. Thank you for your leadership, and I look forward to hearing your comments and to working to get this passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first, let me thank my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator SHAHEEN, for her extraordinary commitment and leadership as my fellow cochair of the Senate Diabetes Caucus. We are introducing a bill to improve access to innovative diabetes technologies for our seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries. Our bill would create a special task force at the Department of Health and Human Services to examine and resolve barriers that seniors face in accessing the latest diabetes management technologies.

New diabetes technologies, such as the artificial pancreas and implantable continuous glucose monitoring systems, allow those who are living with diabetes to better manage their glycemic levels, assess needed therapy on a timely basis, and adhere better to treatment regimes. These technological advances make diabetes easier to manage and therefore improve the health of people with diabetes.

The market arrival of cutting-edge diabetes technologies is something we all celebrate; however, oftentimes we are finding that patients do not realize the full benefits because many of our Nation's seniors find the new technologies to be difficult or impossible for them to afford.

I have heard from numerous seniors who, when transitioning from employer-provided insurance to Medicare, were shocked to learn that the technologies they had relied upon for years to manage their diabetes are no longer covered because they now have lost their employer-provided insurance, which did cover these technologies, and instead are being covered by Medicare. For example, one Mainer unfortunately had to face the reality that Medicare's coverage denial of a particular sensor that he needed for his insulin pump meant paying up to $8,000 out-of-pocket each year if he wants to continue with his current treatment. He wrote:

Because I am now 65, I am denied care that was available when I was 64.

He continued:

This approach not only puts me at risk but is quite likely not cost effective. While the sensors are expensive, the cost of ambulance calls and hospitalizations . . . is certainly more.

I could not say it better. It makes no sense for this individual, who has aged into the Medicare system, to lose coverage that he had and relied upon and used successfully to control his diabetes.

To better support the adoption of these technologies, our bill would require HHS to create a special task force on coverage and payment for innovative diabetes technologies that would bring all stakeholders—from patients to device manufacturers, to government officials and healthcare professionals who are making coverage decisions—to the table. The task force would identify and plan for changes in Medicare coverage and payment policies to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have access to the latest treatments, to the innovations that are currently available, as well as those that are in the pipeline. The task force would also be tasked with developing strategies for supporting adoption of these technologies.

This effort builds on our past advocacy to improve the day-to-day life of individuals with diabetes. In January 2017, in response to the bipartisan effort that Senator SHAHEEN and I have led, CMS first approved the use of continuous glucose monitors. We also successfully urged CMS last year to support the use of smartphone apps in conjunction with continuous glucose monitors. These are proven lifesaving devices that are relied upon by people with diabetes to provide them with realtime measurements of their glucose levels. This information is key to preventing costly—sometimes deadly—diabetes complications.

While I am pleased that our advocacy has helped spur these policy changes, I remain frustrated that too often Medicare lags behind commercial insurers. Greater adoption of these new diabetes techniques can help address the explosive growth in the financial and human toll of diabetes. Diabetes accounts for an extraordinary one-in-three dollars in Medicare spending. It is paramount that we encourage HHS to adopt a more cost-effective and compassionate approach to treating this chronic disease that affects more than 30 million Americans.

The Improving Medicare Beneficiary Access to Innovative Diabetes Technologies Act encourages a proactive approach to diabetes coverage and payment. I encourage my colleagues to support our efforts.

Again, thanks to my partner Senator SHAHEEN for her leadership in this area.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, June 22; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that upon conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Fonzone nomination, postcloture; that the postcloture debate time expire at 11:45 a.m.; further, that the Senate recess following the cloture vote on the Ahuja nomination until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings; that if cloture is invoked on the Ahuja nomination, all postcloture time expire at 2:30 p.m.; further, that following the disposition of the Ahuja nomination, the Senate proceed to legislative session and resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2093, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that the cloture motion on the

motion to proceed to S. 2093 ripen at 5:30; and finally, that if any of the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I want to speak briefly this evening about S. 1, the Senate version of H.R. 1, the democracy reform bill that we are going to be considering moving to proceed to this week, and I hope we will be able to show a unified Democratic Caucus moving to proceed.

It is often described as the voting rights bill, and it is described that way with good justification because there are some very, very important protections that are built into it to protect the voting rights of Americans which are under, I would say, a unique and historic threat now since the, perhaps, 1950s and 1960s, when the Voting Rights Act was passed and some of the levers that were pulled to keep certain people from voting had to be stopped and the vote and the ballot became available much more broadly and led to a much more just society.

But that is not the only part of S. 1. In fact, in my view, it is not even the central part of S. 1. In my view, the central part of S. 1 is getting big, unlimited, anonymous money out of politics.

Now, the two relate because the big, anonymous money schemers that are up to no good in politics are focusing on—guess what? Voter suppression. And, in fact, the same individual, the same person who was running the dark money scheme to control and capture the Supreme Court and the circuit courts has—after being somewhat blown up by a Washington Post expose about the $250 million he was running in dark money through this court-capture scheme—jumped from court-capture scheme, and where did he land? On something rather ironically called the Honest Elections Project, which immediately went to work to file lawsuits and harass election officials and try to make sure that voter suppression took place.

If you think that is a coincidence, the Honest Elections Project is actually a rebrand of an entity that was called the Judicial Education Project—basically, just a name change through corporate hijinks. And that Judicial Education Project is the corporate sibling of something called the Judicial Crisis Network.

And guess what the Judicial Crisis Network did? For this same guy, before he jumped to voter suppression, when he was still doing court capture, the Judicial Crisis Network took the big, fat checks that anonymous donors wrote to pay for the TV campaigns—the dark money TV campaigns—against Garland and for Gorsuch in the first appointment, for Kavanaugh through all of his troubles in the second appointment, and then for Judge Barrett on the eve of the election in the third appointment.

So, you see, it is the same person and the same organizational connection between the court-captured dark money scheme and the voter suppression dark money scheme. It is actually happening in kind of plain light of day, except that we don't pay enough attention to the links.

So this dark money business, getting the big, dark money out of politics, is a big, big deal. And I wanted to share how much of a deal it is to Americans. Dark money corruption polls at the top of all the issues in the last poll I saw. It is the No. 1 issue. If you ask people: If somebody says that they have dedicated themselves to fighting corruption, is that going to make you more likely to vote for them or more likely for you to vote for their opponent? Among all voters, it is 89 to 1 more likely to vote for the candidate dedicated to fighting corruption versus whoever this one is who said, no, not such a big deal to me.

Among independent voters whom the two parties always fight for in elections, 82 to 2—82 percent of independent voters would be more likely to vote for somebody who they see as dedicated to fighting corruption, and only 2 would be more likely to vote for their opponent.

So this is a strong public signal that we are sick of it. And you see it over and over again. This is one poll. You can go through poll after poll after poll, and you see people want the dark money out of politics. They think we are controlled by big special interests. They think much too much stuff gets done behind the scenes.

And, by the way, we just got a little window into the private conversations about this that take place between the Koch brothers' political apparatus and our minority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL's political apparatus.

Jane Mayer wrote about this recently in the New Yorker. And the Koch political apparatus and the MITCH MCCONNELL political apparatus were being briefed on this bill, on S. 1, and on these provisions. And what they were told by the pollster is: Do you know what? We are in big trouble because our conservative voters hate this damn dark money stuff just as badly as those liberals do, and we have tried all these different ways to reframe this, to make it look bad so they might be more against it—none of it worked. None of it worked.

People want their government cleaned up. They are sick to death of big special interest money, and they are particularly sick to death of big special interest money that hides behind fake front groups. So it is not ExxonMobil or Marathon Petroleum that comes to Rhode Island and says, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE is a bum, you should vote against him. No, it is under the phony group with a name like Rhode Islanders for Peace and Puppies in Prosperity. And all they are is a mail drop.

Somebody is behind them, and the voters know in Rhode Island there is no Rhode Islanders for Peace and Puppies in Prosperity. They know they are being had, and they are sick of seeing the ads. And it is not fair to them, as citizens, to not know what is going on in the American governmental process, going on right in front of them.

And it matters to them. It really matters to them. It is the single most important issue for 55 percent of all voters. And among the independent voters we are trying to attract to our separate parties, 58 percent of independent voters, this question of Big Money corruption and government not listening to them, it is the single most important issue—the single most important issue.

Now, make it top three, expand the question. What are the top three most important issues that you care about? Eighty-nine percent of all voters have this in their top three. Eighty-eight percent of independent voters have this in their top three. So let's say you have a real concern about healthcare, or let's say you have a real concern about voting rights, or let's say you have a real concern about the economy—never mind, this is still there in that top three for pretty much 9 out of every 10 Americans.

And what is the level of concern? Very concerned. Very concerned is 86 percent of all voters and 92 percent of all independent voters. About this issue of corruption and money in politics, how concerned are you? Eighty-six percent of all voters said very. Ninety-two percent of independent voters said very.

And if you say: OK, let's, again, expand the aperture a little, very concerned or somewhat concerned? Are you very concerned or somewhat concerned about this dark money corruption, special interest pressure in government—98 percent of all voters, 100 percent of independent voters. I don't know about you all, but I have looked at a lot of polling in my life. Seeing a 100-percent number, that is rare. Every single independent voter polled is very or somewhat concerned about corruption in our democracy.

So I can't wait to get onto S. 1. And if our Republican friends want to filibuster it and stop us from moving forward, I can't wait to see them explain

to their voters back home why they made the choice to come here and, against 89 to 1 for all voters and 82 to 2 for independent voters, take that brave fan for dark money and more corruption and more special interest pressure in our politics. Good luck with that.

I hope at some point we bring that fight to the floor and we spend weeks on it so that as we go into next year, every single American has seen this play out. They have seen that this issue that they are very concerned about, that for more than half of them is the single most important issue, that there is a party here in the Senate that is determined to protect the schemers, the special interests behind the dark money corruption. Good luck taking that to the voters in November.

So to those who are listening and who are thinking: You know, I don't see how we get around a filibuster here. I love S. 1. This is a really important bill. We have to get there. We hope that the Democrats can unite on this, but even then, it is only 50 to 1 or 51 to 1, if the Vice President is allowed to vote, and that is not 60, so there is a filibuster—my answer is: Give it effort and give it time because once Americans—everybody from a Tea Partyer to a Bernie Bro—gets wind of which party in here is the party of special-interest dark money, who wants to protect that—like I said, single most important issue. People go into the voting booth, and they tend to remember the single most important issue, the issue that they are very concerned about, that 86 percent of all voters.

So I hope we find a good way forward. I think it is important for our democracy that the rottenness of all of this come to an end. I don't want to see more of these academic studies that show that Congress listens to big special interests, provably, statistically, and Congress doesn't listen to regular voters, provably, statistically, because of this kind of dark money pressure.

We have got to get beyond that. We have a country out there to put back on its feet not only economically, but we ought to be able to hold our own heads high about having an honest government that is an example to the rest of the world.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:44 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, June 22, 2021, at 10 a.m.